UNIVERSITY
OF FLORIDA
LIBRARIES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

http://www.archive.org/details/minoritygroupsin00amer

101.22:550-105

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY PAMPHLET NO. 550-105

Ethnographic Study Series

MINORITY GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LIBRARY U.S.
MAR 1967
DOCUMENTS DEPT.

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

1966

301.4509597
A512m

UNIVERSITY
OF FLORIDA
LIBRARIES

Ethnographic Study Series

MINORITY GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Contributors

Joann L. Schrock
William Stockton, Jr.
Elaine M. Murphy
Marilou Fromme

Research and writing completed
February 1966

301.4509597
A512m

University of Florida
1853

FOREWORD

This volume was prepared by the Cultural Information Analysis Center (CINFAC), Center for Research in Social Systems (CRESS) of the American University. It is designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, and political institutions and practices of minority groups in the Republic of Vietnam. This study seeks to present as full and as balanced an integrated exposition on selected tribal and other minority groups, as limitations on space and research time permitted. It was compiled from information available in openly published material. Extensive bibliographies are provided to permit recourse to other published sources for more detailed information. There has been no attempt to express any specific point of view or to make policy recommendations. The contents of the study represent the work of the authors and CINFAC and do not represent the official view of the United States Government.

An effort has been made to make this study as comprehensive as possible. It can be expected, however, that the material, interpretations, and conclusions are subject to modification in the light of new information and developments. Such corrections, additions and suggestions for factual, interpretative or other change as readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions. Comments may be addressed to—

Manager
Cultural Information Analysis Center
The American University
5010 Wisconsin Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

PREFACE

CRESS, operating under contract with the Office of the Chief of Research and Development, Department of the Army, has developed through CINFAC this ethnographic study of selected tribal and other minority groups in the Republic of Vietnam. This study was prepared in response to a request from the Directorate of Special Operations, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, Department of the Army.

The task of studying these groups is a complicated one. The country is undergoing crises of various types, in the course of which the groups are more and more coming into contact with modern civilization. It is always difficult to gauge the true depth and nature of social and cultural changes: it does appear, however, that the groups selected for study are deeply involved in these changes.

The studies contained in this volume are designed to provide basic background material on the fundamental social, economic, and political characteristics of the various groups. They are descriptive reports based on secondary sources dealing with the Vietnamese society. Field research was not undertaken, although the comments of consultants and personnel recently returned from the area have been incorporated.

It must be recognized, then, that these studies are not exhaustive. There are appreciable gaps in the information, and many discrepancies in the original sources were difficult to reconcile. Further, the information contained in these studies may be outdated even before it is published and is subject to modification in the light of new developments and information. Therefore, although they contain the latest information available, and the validity of this material has been checked as closely as possible, the user is cautioned to consider these studies as a point of departure to be checked against the current circumstances or conditions of the particular area in which he is working. Extensive bibliographies are included to assist one seeking more detailed information in areas of special interest.

This volume is divided into two parts: the first containing a chapter for each of 18 Montagnard tribal groups, and the second consisting of 7 chapters covering 5 ethnic minority groups, 2 politico-religious sects, and 1 quasi-political group. The chapters in each part are arranged in alphabetic order. Each chapter is designed to be self contained: certain information has therefore been repeated in all of the studies in order to provide in a single location all pertinent information for the user interested in only one group. Each chapter provides information on the group's size and location, historical background, settlement patterns, language, physical and psychological characteristics, social structure, customs and taboos, religion, economic organization, political organization, communications techniques, and paramilitary capabilities. There are also sections designed to assist the outsider in working with the group. Footnotes and bibliographies are included with each separate study and there is an index at the end of each chapter to facilitate the location of specific information in that chapter. In addition, at the end of this volume there is a section index for reference to general categories of information in all the chapters.

MINORITY GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD iii
PREFACE v

PART ONE. TRIBAL GROUPS

Page
CHAPTER 1. The Bahnar 1
2. The Bru 55
3. The Cua 91
4. The Halang 125
5. The Hre 161
6. The Hroi 217
7. The Jarai 257
8. The Jeh 309
9. The Katu 347
10. The Koho 389
11. The Ma 437
12. The M'nong 475
13. The Muong 527
14. The Raglai 573
15. The Rengao 609
16. The Rhade 651
17. The Sedang 721
18. The Stieng 767

PART TWO. OTHER MINORITY GROUPS

CHAPTER 19. The Binh Xuyen 809
20. The Cao Dai 827
21. The Cham 863
22. The Chinese 931
23. The Hoa Hao 1021
24. The Khmer 1051
25. The Indians and Pakistanis 1123

INDEX 1131

LIST OF MAPS

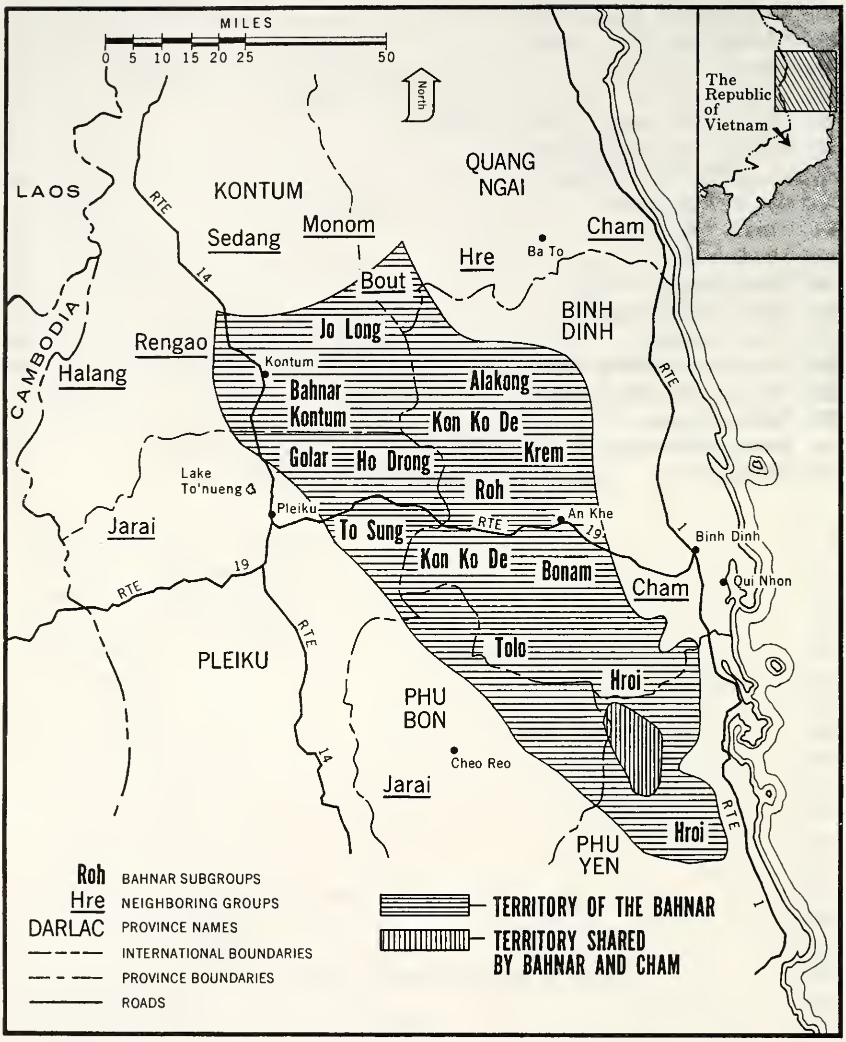
The Bahnar Subgroups x
The Bru 54
The Cua 90
The Halang 124

Page
The Hre 160
The Hroi 216
The Jarai Subgroups 256
The Jeh 308
The Katu Subgroups 346
The Koho Groups 388
The Ma Subgroups 436
The M'nong Subgroups 474
Muong Territories in North Vietnam 526
Muong Settlements in the Republic of Vietnam 529
The Raglai 572
The Rengao 608
The Rhade Subgroups 650
The Sedang 720
The Stieng 766
The Binh Xuyen 808
The Cao Dai 826
The Cham 862
The Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam 930
Principal Places of Origin of the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam 935
The Hoa Hao 1020
The Khmer 1050

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration
1. Layout of Bahnar village 8
2. Bahnar communal house 10
3. Bahnar tomb and detail of tomb decoration 22
4. Layouts of Bru villages 60
5. Bru houses 61
6. Bru weapons 79
7. Cua house 95
8. Cua sacrificial poles 96
9. Halang-Doan house 129
10. Halang communal house 130
11. Jarai longhouse 265
12. Jarai communal house 265
13. Jarai tombs 276
14. Jarai tomb and detail of tomb case 277
15. Roof of Jarai tomb 278
16. Jarai tomb statues 279
17. Jarai spears, swords, scabbards, and crossbow arrows 297
18. Jeh longhouse 312
19. Jeh tribespeople in ceremonial dress 321
20. Ngung Bo house 352
21. Thap house 352
22. Layout of Cao village 354
23. Typical Koho houses 394
24. Layout of typical Koho village 394
25. Sre houses; Lat house 395
26. Layout of Ma village 441
27. Layout of To village 442
28. M'nong village layouts 481

Page
29. M'nong village layout.......... 482
30. M'nong Gar houses.......... 484
31. M'nong Preh houses.......... 486
32. M'nong hut 487
33. M'nong tomb statues.......... 494
34. Prong tomb ornaments.......... 495
35. M'nong Rlam burial mound.......... 496
36. M'nong Gar taboo signs.......... 500
37. M'nong Gar pipe.......... 501
38. M'nong altar to the spirit Nduu.......... 504
39. M'nong Gar spears; M'nong quivers.......... 515
40. Rengao communal house.......... 610
41. Layout of Rhade village.......... 658
42. Rhade longhouse 661
43. Rhade tombs 675
44. Rhade pipe 683
45. Rhade reaping hooks.......... 694
46. Rhade fishing spears.......... 694
47. Rhade weapons 705
48. Layout of Sedang village.......... 726
49. Sedang communal house.......... 727
50. Sedang house 727
51. Sedang tribesman in ceremonial dress.......... 735
52. Stieng house 773


MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
North
The Republic of Vietnam
LAOS
CAMBODIA
KONTUM
QUANG NGAI
BINH DINH
PLEIKU
PHU BON
PHU YEN
Sedang
Monom
Hre
Ba To
Cham
Bout
Jo Long
Rengao
Halang
Kontum
Bahnar Kontum
Alakong
Kon Ko De
Krem
Golar
Ho Drong
Roh
Lake To'nueng
Pleiku
Jarai
To Sung
RTE 19
An Khe
Binh Dinh
Qui Nhon
Kon Ko De
Bonam
Cham
Tolo
Hroi
Cheo Reo
Jarai
Hroi
RTE 14
RTE 1
Roh BAHNAR SUBGROUPS
Hre NEIGHBORING GROUPS
DARLAC PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
TERRITORY OF THE BAHNAR
TERRITORY SHARED BY BAHNAR AND CHAM

The Bahnar Subgroups

PART ONE. TRIBAL GROUPS

CHAPTER 1. THE BAHNAR

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Bahnar tribes, numbering between 80,000 and 200,000, occupy a strategic area of approximately 4,000 square kilometers in the Central Highlands of the Republic of Vietnam.[1]

The Bahnar dialects are Mon-Khmer in origin and are related to those of the Stieng, M'nong, and Sedang, three other important tribal groups.[2] Family structure is based on a bilateral kinship system, with neither male nor female dominant.[3] The family and the village are the basic units of political organization. Villages are grouped into a regional association or *toring* for purposes of administering intervillage matters such as hunting, fishing, and farming rights. Clan structure or organization appears to be lacking.[4] Extremely religious, the Bahnar interact continually with the animistic spirits surrounding them.

Names of Tribe and Subgroups

The meaning and origin of the name Bahnar is unknown. Although the precise number and breakdown of Bahnar tribal subgroups is in dispute, most authorities agree that the following are subgroups: Alakong, Bonam, Golar, Ho Drong, Jo Long, Kon Ko De, Kontum, Krem, Roh, Tolo (Tolotenir), and To Sung.* Despite the fact that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate their claims, other sources include the Cham-Hrui, Rolo, Boutes, and Rengao among the Bahnar.[5]

The various Bahnar subgroups can be roughly divided as follows: Eastern Bahnar subgroups—Alakong, Bonam, Kon Ko De, Krem, Roh, and Tolo;† Western Bahnar subgroups—Ho Drong, Golar, Jo Long, Kontum, and To Sung. The general patterns of customs and traditions differ between the Eastern and Western subgroups.

---

* The Hroi are also usually classified as a Bahnar subgroup. However, since the Hroi have been greatly influenced by the Rhade and the Cham, two important Malayo-Polynesian groups, this subgroup is the subject of a separate chapter in this volume.

† The Hroi would also be considered an Eastern Bahnar subgroup.

Although the differences are largely due to varying degrees of contact with other peoples, the dialects of the Eastern Bahnar are more closely related to one another than they are to the dialects of the Western Bahnar.

Size and Location of Group

Although no accurate records exist, the Bahnar population was estimated at 80,000 in 1952, but estimates for 1960 indicated that they may number as many as 200,000.[6] They live north of the Darlac Plateau in the area comprising the western portion of Binh Dinh Province, northwestern Phu Yen Province, northeastern Phu Bon and Pleiku Provinces, southeastern Kontum, and southwestern Quang Ngai Province (see Map, p. vi).

Relationship to Other Groups

As closely as can be determined, the groups neighboring the Bahnar include: the Jarai to the west and southwest; the Rengao to the northwest; the Sedang, Monom, and Hre to the north; the ethnic Vietnamese to the east; and the Cham to the east and southeast.

Terrain Analysis

The area inhabited by the Bahnar is centered in the Binh Dinh Mountains and consists mainly of rounded hills of crystalline rock, many of which are over 3,000 feet in elevation. Main drainage is into the Song Ba River and its tributaries.

The climate of this mountainous area is influenced by both the summer (May—October) and winter (mid-September—March) monsoon winds, which provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer these winds come mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the rain brought by the summer monsoon. The winter monsoon also provides some precipitation, although this is quite undependable. In contrast to the monsoon, during July and August excessively arid local winds are dominant. Called the "Winds of Laos," these hot, dry winds, sometimes blowing with extreme violence and provoking intense evaporation, descend the eastern edges of the Bahnar land, which slopes to the coastal area.[7]

Inland temperatures are lower than those along the coastal lowland areas, differing by more than 15 degrees during the winter months.

Much of the Bahnar area is covered by rain forest, though some savanna is evident to the south. The tropical rain forest has a three-story canopy, the topmost layer consisting of large trees whose crowns form an almost continuous canopy 75 to 90 feet high. Below this is a second canopy of smaller trees, reaching a height of 45 to 60 feet. Next is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings of various sizes.[8] Humidity is high, and many herbaceous plants, such as orchids, woody climbing plants, and liana, are common. The rain forest area can usually be penetrated with little difficulty.

Savanna areas consist principally of *tranh (Imperata cylindrica)* grass—a tall, coarse grass used for thatching roofs of houses; when young and tender, tranh is used for grazing. Probably repeated cultivation, fire, and poor soil conditions have created these savanna areas.

Various wild animals are found in the forests: bears, buffaloes, elephants, boars, deer, tigers, and monkeys. The forest abounds with leeches and other bloodsuckers, especially during and after heavy rains.

Transportation is very difficult in this region, particularly during the rainy season. The Song Ba River, a broad stream in its lower reaches, is seldom used for navigation due to shifting channels and variable depths. Large boats can utilize short stretches during the high-water season caused by the rain-bearing monsoon, whereas only small native craft can use the waterways at other times of the year. The Song Ba tributaries are generally navigable by only the smallest craft.

A number of roads cross the Bahnar area: National Route 14 connects Kontum with Pleiku and Ban Me Thuot to the south and runs north and east to Hoi An on the coast. An Khe is located on National Route 19, which links An Nhon with Pleiku.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

The Bahnar are classified as a Mon-Khmer ethnic group in terms of language, customs, and physical appearance. The Mon-Khmer are generally believed to have originated in the upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated in many directions.[1]

Language

The Bahnar speak a nontonal language of Mon-Khmer origin. In recent years, many new words have been introduced into the language as a result of contact with neighboring peoples.

Most Bahnar subgroups speak varying dialects reflecting the regional differences. The Tolo, Krem, and Kon Ko De subgroups speak the same dialect with local variations. With the exception of the Bonam dialect, similar only to that of the Hre people in Quang Ngai,[2] the different dialects are mutually intelligible among the Bahnar subgroups. The Bahnar in the border areas reportedly understand the Jarai and Rhade languages as well. French is spoken by some Bahnar, notably those who served with the French forces. Men who have had dealings with merchants, and some of the children, speak a little Vietnamese.[3]

In 1861, Christian missionaries in Kontum devised a written language for the Bahnar. This script, resembling the romanized script of the Vietnamese, comprised Latin characters with Bahnar variations and was taught to Bahnar children until anti-French movements within the tribe interrupted their education. Teaching of the script was resumed in 1883, and it was officially adopted in 1935.[4] To date a number of books in the Bahnar language have been published, including dictionaries and Christian religious works translated by missionaries.

Legendary History

The Bahnar explain their origin in myths and legends transmitted orally from generation to generation. Examples of these myths are those related by the Bahnar Krem and Bahnar Roh.

The Bahnar Krem in the Kim Son area tell a story concerning the two sons of the deities Yang Bot and Yang Gia. The elder of the two sons was prone to long absences in the jungle, hunting, fishing, and other frivolous indulgences, while the younger son was industrious and respectful to his parents. The elder son's prolonged absences saddened his mother, Yang Gia, and she died. The elder son returned home after his mother's death. His failure to understand that her death was at least partially his fault angered his father, Yang Bot, so that he struck and chased the elder son back into the jungle. Yang Bot remained on the plains with his younger son, instructing him and watching his descendants' progress. However, he began to worry about his elder son and searched for him. Finding him, and noting that this son had not progressed, Yang Bot attempted to help by giving him a language and instructing him in the use of weapons. Unfortunately, the mountain climate caused Yang Bot to become ill and to die before he could fully instruct his elder son in the things necessary for progress. Since that time the descendants of the elder son have remained in the mountains, speaking a different dialect, and have not advanced as have the descendants of the younger son, who stayed in the plains.[5]

The Bahnar Roh explain their origin in the following legend: The god Bok Kei, having created the earth, searched unsuccessfully among the lesser gods for a ruler for the earth. His two children, a boy and a girl, playing nearby, observed their father's dilemma and offered to take the job. Before sending them to the earth, the father took them on a pleasure trip to the moon. There he put each child into a drum, replaced the drumheads, and hurled the drums to earth. The drums crashed on the ground, and the boy and the girl stepped out onto a new landscape containing plants, trees, fruits, and animals. Each built a separate house in which to live on the earth. One night Bok Kei, by magic, caused his son to be transported into the bed of his daughter. In the morning, seeing what Bok Kei had done, they realized that he wanted them to live together. Soon the girl gave birth to a hundred eggs which hatched into a hundred male and female children: fifty went to live in the plains, and fifty stayed in the mountains with their parents. In this way the Roh explain the origin of the people who live in the mountains and those who live on the plains.[6]

Factual History

The history of the Bahnar tribe indicates that for several centuries they were a very powerful people. In the 15th century, the Bahnar aided the Cham in their fight against the Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) ; at other times the Bahnar revolted against the Cham. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bahnar forced the Khmer king to receive their envoys, evidence that the Bahnar had much power and authority in their own territory.

During the 18th century, the Laotians gradually extended their domain south into the highland area inhabited by the Bahnar.

Although they were not in complete control of the tribal area, the Laotians established several military outposts, and their claim to the territory was not challenged. In 1827, however, the Siamese conquered Laos and assumed Laotian claims to the highland areas. Siamese military outposts were established in the Bahnar area, and taxes were collected from the villages in the immediate areas of the outposts. During this period of Siamese dominance, intertribal warfare became widespread, and the Bahnar were almost eliminated by the warlike Jarai and Sedang.[7]

The Annamese, controlling the territory along the edge of the Siamese-claimed highlands, attempted to extend their influence among the tribal peoples. As part of the Annamese effort to establish their influence in the Siamese-claimed territory, in about 1843 the Annamese recognized Khiem as the autonomous leader of the Bahnar people and gave him a title in the court of Hue. After 1846, Annamese claims to the highland territory were reinforced by the establishment of military outposts in Bahnar areas only loosely controlled by the Siamese.[8] As they secured local control through these outposts, the Annamese authorized only their own traders to deal with the tribesmen.

In addition to the disruptive influence of the Laotians, Siamese, and Annamese, in 1849 the Bahnar tribesmen were faced with a new outside force. In that year, two French Catholic priests, Fathers Dourisboure and Desgouts, founded a mission at Kontum and gave medical assistance to the tribespeople.[9] These two priests so gained the affection of the Bahnar that when the Annamese sent troops to seize the missionaries in 1854 the tribesmen refused to guide the soldiers. When Father Guerlach arrived at the mission in 1883, there were four villages of baptized Bahnar tribesmen.

With the treaty of 1884, making the Annamese nation a French protectorate, the French assumed Annamese territorial claims in the highland region. The mission in Kontum supported French aspirations and attempted to limit the influence of the Siamese outposts in the area.[10] To consolidate French influence in the area, the French in 1888 sent a soldier, David Mayrena, to Kontum. With the help of the French priests, Father J. B. Guerlach in particular, Mayrena was able to form a confederation of the Bahnar, Rengao, and Sedang and proclaimed himself Marie I, titular King of the Sedang. He appointed a tribal chief named Krui as President of the Bahnar Republic.[11] Mayrena then committed so many dishonest acts, such as the illegal sale of titles and lands, that he was exiled from French Indochina and died shortly thereafter.

In 1893, a treaty between the French and the Siamese marked the end of Siamese claims to territory east of the Mekong River; the highland area then officially became part of the French Annamese protectorate.[12] The French began to consolidate their authority in the area and attempted to contain the widespread intertribal warfare. In 1897, when the Jarai attacked a supply convoy en route to the mission at Kontum, Father Guerlach called upon the Bahnar to come to his assistance. They sent 1,200 men, the largest body of Montagnards ever to put themselves under the command of one man. The Jarai were defeated, and after peace was concluded, the missionaries arranged an alliance between the Bahnar of Kontum, the Rengao, and the Bonam.[13]

In 1923, the French Government issued a policy manifesto governing the Montagnards. It was agreed that the social structure of the tribes, whether patriarchy, matriarchy, or clan, would be respected by the French Government. Certain zones were to be closed off to alien settlement; the trading of goods—salt in particular—was to be regulated. The heads of the provinces were to codify tribal laws and collect data on tribal customs, superstitions, and folklore. Tribal groups were to be permanently settled near irrigated ricefields, and special schooling in the tribal languages was to be provided. Nevertheless, French plantations continued to increase, and the tribes witnessed gradual French encroachment on their lands.[14]

During the Indochina War, the Bahnar supported the French. With the Geneva Agreement of 1954, the Republic of Vietnam assumed responsibility for the administration of the highland groups.

Settlement Patterns

The slash-and-burn method of agriculture employed by the Bahnar forces them to move their villages approximately every 3 years, or whenever the soil becomes too impoverished to support their rice crops. Traditionally, the Bahnar have lived in villages of approximately 200 inhabitants. Except for Plei Ba Doi and Plei Bon, centers of the Bahnar, few village populations total as many as a thousand people.[15] Bahnar villages, once fortified, have in recent years been fenced to prevent cattle from wandering into the fields.[16] Now, to satisfy military needs, they are again sometimes fortified. The number of houses in a Bahnar village may vary from 20 to 100, determined by the number of families living within the boundaries.

The Bahnar house, much like that of the Rhade, is rectangular and built on pilings above the ground. Oriented in an east-west direction, most houses measure approximately 10 to 14 meters by 3 to 4 meters; however, the size varies according to the Bahnar subgroup and the number of families living in the house. Sections of the house are designated for specific members of the family: the parents and infants sleep in the east wing; the center belongs to the older daughters; and west wing is reserved for young boys. If the family is wealthy, a servants' compartment may also be in-

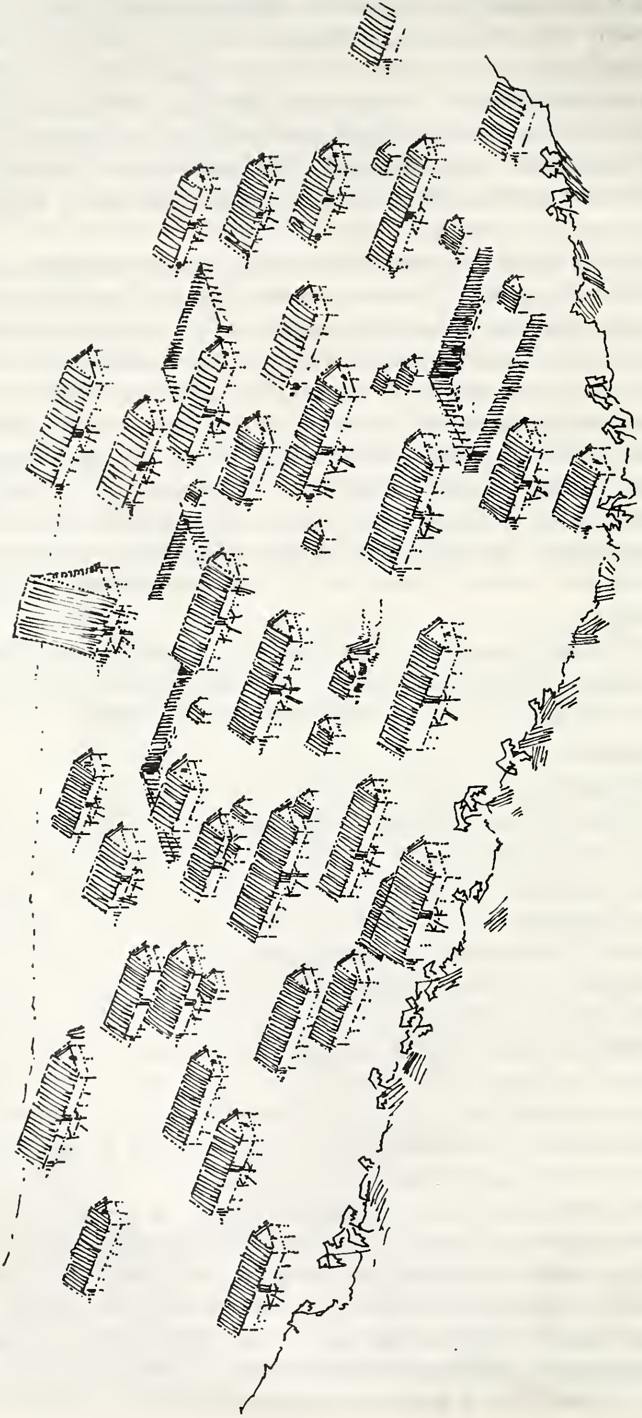


Figure 1. Layout of Bahnar village.

cluded in the west wing. The first two sleeping quarters are designated as *lam* and *hangao,* respectively. Later on, additions called *rong ngir* may be made on the western side of the building for the sons' and daughters' households. If the husband is rich enough to take a second wife, an addition is made for her; then the first wife is given her own compartment. Some variations in the construction of houses have been reported among the subgroups.

Houses in the Bonam area are built on stilts, 0.8 to 1.5 meters high (rarely are stilts more than 2 meters high), made of tree trunks. Bonam houses, measuring 8 to 20 meters long and 13.5 to 14 meters high, consist of bamboo walls, thatch roofs, and bamboo floors. Three entrances—one for welcome guests, one for the family, and one facing a sloped area, for ceremonial use only—lead into a hallway within the house. Tree-trunk ladders are used for access to the first two entrances.[17] Inside the house, the hearth located on the right of the door is reserved for guests; several other hearths at the far end of the room are used by the couple and their children. Wooden shelves attached to the walls hold miscellaneous items. Baskets, used for storing clothes, and jars, containing money, jewels, and other possessions, are kept in the space opposite the sleeping area.

In the Krem area, houses are built on stilts which are shorter than those used in the Bonam area, but the houses are somewhat wider. Entrance ladders are made of woven rope, and the floor is made of woven bamboo. The main door, located in the center of the house, faces east and is flanked by smaller doors on either side.[18] Unlike the Bonam house, the Krem house has no hall. The hearth belonging to the owner of the house and his wife is situated to the right of the doors; the hearths used by the married children are situated at either the left or right wall. Tool shelves, baskets, and jars are kept in sleeping quarters of the family members.

The houses of the Roh resemble those of the Krem, with the addition of a platform at the main door which faces east. Tree trunks with steps carved in them serve as ladders. Each room contains at least one hearth—a square wooden frame filled with soil—on which a stove is placed. The stove belonging to the house-owner and his wife should not be moved, as the Bahnar believe the hearth god, the principal kitchen deity, resides in the stove and should not be disturbed.

The communal house or *rong,* readily distinguishable from all other houses by its high, incurved, pointed roof, faces in a northeast-southwest direction. Among the various subgroups, the communal house may be referred to as *hnam rong, horong, wal,* or *jong.*[19]

Pilings, normally seven on the sides and two on either end, support the communal house with the main platform on the southwest side. The walls of the house are made of a braided wattle of whole bamboo. The long sides, horizontally bowed, include two sliding doors; the short sides are straight and without openings. The principal door measures about 2 meters by 1 meter; the smaller door at the southwest end is generally not more than 1 meter 30 centimeters by 70 centimeters.[20] A thick unornamented board forms the threshold.

The floor of the communal house is made of crushed bamboo planking supported by four large beams and is designed to prevent lance thrusts from below. At the door near the entrance are suspended two large drums. Small geometric figures on the beams and an occasional skull constitute the room decorations.

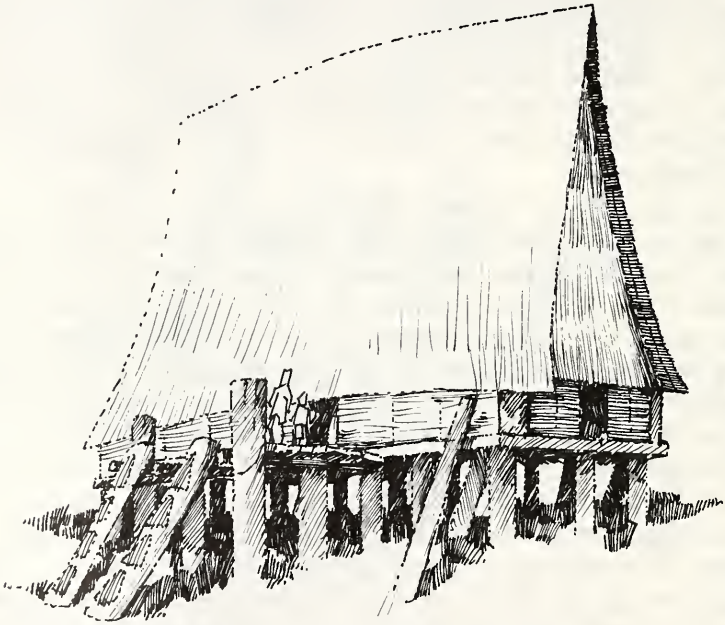


Figure 2. Bahnar communal house.

8 meters behind the house. In An Tuc, small structures resembling

The rong provides a sleeping place for boys from puberty until marriage [21] and therefore is also known as the bachelors' house. In addition, the communal house, with the *cham* or village square in front, has several other uses: it serves as a marketplace and sacrificial site, as well as the reception area for receiving strangers; it is also a meeting place for the village elders, and villagers assemble here when important decisions are made. In villages lacking communal houses, unmarried youth of both sexes sleep in their parents' houses.*

In addition to the family houses and the communal house, Bahnar villages contain other smaller buildings. In An Lao, Van Canh, and Vinh Thanh, chicken coops and pigsties are located 7 or 8 meters behind the house. In An Tuc, small structures resembling dog kennels, situated in front of the main houses, are used for keeping chickens and pigs. Generally, buffaloes are not stabled; they are tied to trees.[22] The tribesmen greatly fear the danger of fire;[23] consequently, to protect the rice reserve, granaries are located on the windward end of a village. The graveyard is usually located behind the village, but in some cases it is to one side.

---

* See "Social Structure," pp. 15–24.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Bahnar women are small and usually have short legs, large feet, and delicate hands. Generally, the tribeswomen have long, thin hair which may or may not be wavy. Their noses are small, but their earlobes may be greatly distended by ear ornaments. The women's bronze skin resembles the color of burnt chestnut.

Bahnar men are more difficult to categorize: some are big, some small; some have very well-developed chests, and others very skinny torsos. The skin, smooth and hairless, ranges in color from light to dark brown. Although heavy beards and mustaches are greatly esteemed by the Bahnar, they themselves have only light growth of facial hair. They may occasionally be seen wearing a sparse goatee, a beard, or a thin mustache of several hairs falling from each side of the mouth,[1] but generally the men shave once a week.

While the tribesmen do not tattoo themselves, they do scarify their chests during funerals of relatives. The traditional custom of filing down the front teeth of children at puberty is probably now practiced less frequently than in the past.

Health

Most weak and sickly persons die in infancy; therefore, those that reach young adulthood are fairly robust and healthy. The average lifespan of the Bahnar is about 37 years.[2]

The principal disease among the Bahnar is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. The two most common types of malaria in the Bahnar area are the benign tertian form, which causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but usually is not fatal, and the malignant tertian form, which kills both infants and adults.[3]

Intestinal parasites, tuberculosis, diarrhea, dysentery, leprosy, and venereal diseases are also common, as are sores which look like yaws but, unlike yaws, do not respond to penicillin. Several factors contribute to the spread of intestinal disorders among the Bahnar. First, the tribesmen eat with their hands and do not wash them before eating. Second, dust-covered fresh fruits and vegetables, eaten unwashed, abound in disease-causing germs. Also, the habit of not bathing their babies contributes to the high rate of parasitic infection found among the children.

The Bahnar have little understanding of biological processes. They distinguish between people whose sores heal quickly and those whose sores always become infected: the former possess "bitter blood," the latter, "sweet blood."[4] Believing that illness is caused by evil spirits, they perform sacrifices to pacify these spirits. Sorcerers are summoned to determine the cause of illness and to prescribe appropriate rituals for the cure.[5] Among those summoned are midwives, bonesetters, and magicians, who are always paid regardless of whether the patient is cured or not. Other healers may also be called in, but they are paid only if a cure is effected.[6] It may be difficult for an outsider to distinguish between a magician and a healer, as a tribesman sometimes fulfills both functions.

When a child appears to be seriously ill, a member of the father's or mother's family is designated by the magician to adopt the child in an alliance called *topok.* The child then takes a name relating him to his new family. Marriage is forbidden between the persons involved in a topok alliance.[7]

Initially, the Bahnar were extremely reluctant to seek medical aid at government clinics: they feared dying outside the village because they believed their souls would have no homes—the worst fate that could befall them.[8] Gradually, the overall tribal attitude has changed, and now the people generally attend clinics on a regular basis.

Considerations of sanitation have religious overtones and dictate the places for performing bodily functions. The living area must not be soiled; even spitting into the hearth is forbidden. During the daytime, bodily functions are performed outside the village fence, near a stump, a projecting rock, or a low tree limb, but far from running water. Only at night do the tribespeople deviate from this rule; then the men may urinate from the porch, and the women generally use the area under the house.[9] In the communal house and in some of the houses of the wealthy tribesmen, wooden urinals are used.

The prohibition against contaminating water, apparently associated with a desire to maintain pure water supplies, prevents the Bahnar from washing after performing bodily functions. Traditionally, the tribesmen believed that polluting any water source physically also made the water unclean spiritually.[10]

The young men and women put oil on their hair, comb it carefully, and clean their teeth with a splinter of wood. As the tribespeople grow older, they tend to devote less time and attention to their grooming habits and appearance.

Endurance and Manual Dexterity

The Bahnar can carry a load weighing 20 kilograms and easily cover 40—sometimes even 70 or 80—kilometers a day over difficult mountainous terrain. The load is usually strapped to the tribesman's back, so that his hands remain free for swifter and safer traveling.[11]

Possessing a high degree of manual dexterity, the tribesmen skillfully pursue their customary occupations with the help of only a few simple tools. Houses are constructed with only a hatchet and a knife; the land is prepared and tilled using a small ax, a pick, and a sickle; wild animals were traditionally hunted with a saber. In addition, various handicrafts such as weaving of fiber and cloth are proficiently executed.[12]

Psychological Characteristics

To understand the Bahnar, one must realize that for them all activity, even the simple act of felling a tree, involves complex family relationships and consideration of the surrounding animistic spirits. For example, before a tree can be cut down, a sacrifice must be made to the spirit of the tree. A tribesman does not make a decision on a course of action until he has consulted with members of his family, village elders, or a sorcerer. The sorcerer's purpose is to communicate with the spirits and determine their attitude toward the proposed decision.

When a Bahnar tribesman makes a promise, he will carry it out, expecting others to do likewise.[13]

Reportedly, the Bahnar are intelligent, eager to learn, and fascinated by concepts new to them (e.g., the world is round).[14] Children learn quickly; they master the basic principles of reading more rapidly than the adults. The tribesmen absorb instruction more readily through demonstrations than through verbal explanations. Their interest is aroused when they can observe a series of actions producing a desired result. Adults have good memories for shapes; for example, after seeing a design in a blanket, they can weave a reproduction of it from memory.[15]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Bahnar society is organized into the basic units of the family and the village. The kinship system is bilateral: lineage is determined through both the male and female sides of the family; marriage may be proposed by either the boy's or girl's family; and the young married couple normally divide their place of residence between their parents' homes until they establish their own household. Personal property is inherited by blood relatives, and common property is distributed among the surviving spouse and blood relatives.

Kinship System

The terms subgroup and tribe are applied to the Bahnar to classify them according to similar linguistic and cultural traits; however, the Bahnar have no overall tribal political organization. The basic units of societal organization are the family and the village.*

The family or *ko'tum* includes the husband and his wife (or wives), their children, and other lineal blood relatives. Based on a bilateral kinship system, descent is reckoned on both the male and female sides of the family. Men and women are regarded as essentially equal in status, helping each other in the performance of their duties, although there is a clear distinction in tasks assigned to the two sexes. People considered outside the family unit include unmarried adults, young widows and widowers, persons whose spouses have disappeared, and concubines.[1]

Class Structure

The social classes among the Bahnar are *rongei*, or free men; *dik*, or people working off debts; and *tomoi*, or strangers—anyone, including a Bahnar who comes from beyond the boundaries of the toring, the territory possessed collectively by several villages. (Another classification, *mona*, or prisoners of war, is now outdated, since no mona have existed since the French pacification of the Bahnar area in the 1880's.[2]

The Bahnar also group people according to their maturity and their sex; they do not know and do not keep records of exact chronological age. The eight major categories, or *cal*, which the Bahnar further subdivide according to sex and status, are:[3] (1) *cal de nge*—babies; (2) *cal de hayoh*—children; (3) *cal de adruh to'dam*—adolescents; (4) *cal de po'dra*—young adults about 22 to 30 years old; (5) *cal de po'drah*—adults about 30 to 35 years old; (6) *cal de ho'moh*—adults about 35 to 40 years old; (7) *cal de moh*—adults from about 40 to 45 or 50 years old; and (8) *cal de kra*—elders above 45 or 50 years old.

---

* See "Political Organization," p. 35.

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Men and women, although they play different roles in the society, treat each other kindly and as equals. The role of the men includes work such as hunting, fishing, building houses and tombs, carrying on trade, and clearing the land for planting.

The role of women includes carrying water; gathering wood, edible roots, and fruits from the forest; cooking; preparing wine; weaving; and performing light farm tasks in garden plots and the ricefields.

Young children are raised permissively and allowed a great deal of freedom. Sometimes they are given small tasks to perform, such as looking after the animals; older children learn the family trade or occupation by assisting their parents.

While they live in the communal house, adolescent unmarried men engage in a number of crafts, which include making tools, traps, nets, pipes, baskets, and bamboo storage tubes for water, salt, and tobacco. Although these articles are made only by the bachelors, some can be used only by the women.

Daily Routine

An important Bahnar custom is the daily, fresh preparation of rice—their basic staple food. Each morning the tribeswomen grind sufficient paddy, or unhusked rice, to meet their family's food requirements for the day.[4]

The parents and children gather around the family hearth for the main daily meal around 7 or 8 in the morning. At noon no formal meal is prepared; the members of the family eat a light snack in the field or wherever they are at the time. After sunset the family again gathers around the hearth for an evening meal of leftovers. In the evening, the Bahnar socialize with their friends and neighbors, often gathering around a storyteller to listen to folktales.

Marriage

The Bahnar rarely remain unmarried, as it is considered unnatural to remain single. The burial ceremony for a bachelor is performed as cheaply as possible,[5] demonstrating that bachelorhood is not esteemed.

Romantic love plays a part in the relationships between young men and women of the Bahnar. Romantic ideas are expressed in their songs and poems.[6] The kiss is unknown among them;[7] when a woman unties a man's turban in public, it is a declaration of love.[8] In some Bahnar subgroups, a couple's romantic relationship consists of talking together, picking flowers, looking for wood, meeting at festivals and songfests,[9] and expressing their feelings in songs while working in the fields together. On the other hand, shy persons may merely glance amorously at one another.[10]

However, sometimes the young unmarried of both sexes are fairly free in their sexual relations, which they conceal; for if they are not discreet and the relationship is disclosed, the pair will be held responsible for any harmful incident occurring in the village. If pigs and chickens suddenly die, the couple pay a fine to each of their parents and to the village; and then the couple must marry.[11] The fine paid to the parents is considered a compensation for the couple's failure to consult them. The nature of the fine depends upon the severity of the parents; the fine may consist of chickens or pigs.[12] If a young girl becomes pregnant, she usually marries her lover; if the man is already married, she becomes his wife of second rank. This marriage is not a dishonor nor will it hinder her later in becoming a wife of first rank.[13]

Although romantic love is significant in the courtship pattern of a young couple, the marriage bond is considered an alliance between the families of the bride and groom rather than strictly an idealistic liaison between individuals. The alliance, sealed by the exchange of gifts, signifies that the bride takes the place and title of wife of first rank in her husband's household. No alliance between families is formed when the husband takes a second wife.

There are no child marriages among the Bahnar.[14] To marry, a couple must be old enough to cultivate a field—15 to 18 years—and they must have the consent of their parents. If the parents are dead, no consent is needed from any relative. Nor is consent needed if a widow, widower, or bachelor over 30 years of age wishes to marry.[15] The couple should not be related by blood or by topok alliance (adoption),* as marriage between even distant relatives is considered incest. If such a marriage takes place, sacrifices must be offered to appease the evil spirits and to prevent them from harming the village.[16]

An engagement to marry can be sought by either the boy or the girl. In general, the wealthier person takes the initiative.[17] Engagement necklaces are exchanged, but this is not a significant ceremony, for an engagement may be easily broken. However, if a capricious reason terminates the engagement, payment of a small indemnity is required.[18]

Intermediaries serve as witnesses during the betrothal ritual, the marriage ceremony, the installation of the couple in their new home, and in the separation—should one result. When a marriage is being arranged, the intermediaries discuss the conditions for the marriage celebration with the families concerned. At the ceremony itself, they sip wine through a straw and ask the spirits to protect the young couple. The intermediaries witness separations, since they know which possessions each party brought to the marriage.

---

* See "Health and Personal Hygiene," pp. 12–14.

The marriage ceremony is performed at the house of either the bride or the groom. Both families may share the expense, or the richer family may pay the full sum. After the intermediaries have drunk from the jar of wine, the couple's attendants also partake of the wine. The families of the bride and groom contract an alliance of friendship at this time.

After the ceremony, the intermediaries install the young couple in the house in which they will live, and the attendants cook rice and a chicken.[19] If the young couple have a house in good condition at their disposal, they will set up housekeeping immediately.[20] Since no dowry is involved, the husband's father lends him some animals when the couple set up their own household. Usually, however, for the first 2 or 3 years, the couple live with their parents, dividing their residence between the home of the wife's parents and that of the husband's parents. Trouble with in-laws frequently results. If the conflict between the couple and their in-laws is serious enough to lead to a divorce, the village elders may intervene to hasten the installation of the couple in their own house.[21]

In the Bahnar subgroups the basic marriage ritual is similar; however, differences are notable in the arrangements pertaining to family consent before the marriage and living patterns of the couple afterwards.

The Bahnar greatly respect marriage; therefore, they strive to maintain harmonious relationships between husband and wife. The traditional tribal laws regarding adultery reflect the binding nature of wedlock; however, adultery, a deviation from the marriage pattern, is a frequent cause of family discord. If a married woman commits adultery and has a child, her husband is considered the father. If a married man has a child by an unmarried girl, he pays her a fine; if he asks the girl to become his wife of second rank and she refuses, he owes her nothing. Theoretically, once the fine has been paid, the normal life of the family goes on as before. In actuality, the Bahnar can be very jealous, and adultery can produce antagonism among the persons involved.[22]

Divorce and Second Marriage

Divorce is a very significant step for the Bahnar, but if a marriage is not going well, the couple may obtain a divorce. However, the elders of the village and the couple's relatives try first to reconcile them. If a reconciliation is impossible, the divorce may be initiated by either the husband or the wife, or both, if each has good reason. Generally, the tribunal of elders has jurisdiction over divorce cases. A divorce is not granted if one party is in prison or absent. Grounds for divorce include: bigamy, repeated adultery, concubinage, refusal to have sexual relations with the marriage partner, repeated brutality and sexual aberrations, refusal to care for aged parents-in-law, and refusal to treat a venereal disease.

Custody of the children is customarily determined by their height. Children measuring the height of their mother's chest may choose the parent with whom they will live; smaller children stay with their mother.[23] Usually, after a divorce, each partner returns to his own family and thereby becomes eligible to remarry. After a divorce, marital duties and fidelity are suspended immediately; but when one spouse dies, the surviving divorced partner still has certain obligations. He or she must make appropriate sacrifices and participate in the burial ceremony.

Among the Bahnar Roh, divorce requires appearance before the village chief. Each of the partners holds one end of a thread while a villager cuts it. If one party refuses the divorce, the initiator of the proceedings pays the contester money equal to that spent on the wedding day and provides support for the children until they grow up. Children are usually divided between the parents. However, if the couple has children, a divorce is more difficult to secure.

For a divorce in the Bonam area, the families of both partners return to each other the gifts and money they each spent on the wedding day. In the presence of the village chief, the bride and groom return the wedding bracelets exchanged during the marriage ceremony.[24]

Among the Krem, divorce is rare, as the villagers frown upon it and divorced people find it difficult to remarry. When divorce occurs, the procedure is similar to that in the Bonam area.[25]

A man with a wife of first rank, that is, a wife from a family which allied itself with his family at the occasion of their marriage, may take a wife of second rank. This may occur after 10 or 15 years of marriage. The first wife may treat the second wife as an intruder, even though each has her own area in the house. To take a second wife, the husband must obtain his first wife's permission and pay her a heavy fine.[26] Failure to do this gives the first wife grounds for divorce. However, if the first wife is sterile, the husband can take a second wife without the first wife's permission.[27]

A second marriage is celebrated like the first except there is no alliance between the two families. Generally, less elaborate preparations are made; the feast is smaller and fewer guests are invited. A second wife does not automatically become a wife of first rank on the death of her husband's first wife.[28]

When a marriage partner dies, the surviving spouse is expected to remain faithful and cannot remarry until the tomb of the deceased spouse has been abandoned. The family keeps an eye on the survivor to see that he or she does not betray the dead spouse. The survivor must make the appropriate sacrifices and participate in the burial ceremonies. In addition, the survivor cannot remarry until he or she has performed a special ceremony, the *gai adro*. In the case of a divorce, this ceremony is not performed.[29]

At the gai adro as practiced among the Western Bahnar, a widower gathers his unmarried sisters-in-law around a jar of wine and says, "Who wishes to marry me?" If he receives a negative reply, he gives each a token gift. A widow does exactly the same with her unmarried brothers-in-law. No ceremony is required if there are no unmarried brothers-in-law or sisters-in-law. Among the Eastern Bahnar, a widower may remarry without the gai adro ceremony if he had only one wife.[30]

Property Ownership Within the Family

Property, called *to'mam* among the Bahnar, includes handmade objects, such as weapons, implements, traps, jars, gongs, houses, kitchen utensils, and granaries. Also considered property are livestock, poultry, game, fish, honey, and farm crops. The land itself is not considered to'mam, since it is occupied by individuals but not owned by them.

Each spouse retains title to his or her personal property, *to'mam ko'dih,* and its use. Property called *to'mam atum* consists of goods held in common by a married couple. These items are the products of their joint efforts. In the early years of marriage, the husband usually handles common property matters, but in the later years, the wife is responsible for them. Children usually have no possessions except those which they may have inherited.[31] By the age of adolescence, young people have usually acquired some personal property.

Inheritance Customs

Upon the death of a spouse, his or her personal property, to'mam ko'dih, is used first to defray the cost of burial and the closing of the tomb. The remainder of the personal property is then divided among any descendants and any relatives the same age as the deceased or older.

The death of a spouse also permits the apportionment of common property, to'mam atum. One-half of all the goods constituting common property goes to the surviving spouse. The other half is divided among any descendants and any relatives the same age as the deceased or older. If the husband has two wives, however, the husband and the first wife are each entitled to half of the common property acquired after their marriage and to a third of the common property acquired after the husband's second marriage. The second wife has a right to a third of the common property acquired after her marriage. The deceased's share of the property is divided among members of the families involved.

Inheritances are distributed equitably to those having a traditional right to them. Among the Bahnar the eldest son is not given a larger inheritance portion; if the youngest child has cared for his parents during their declining years, he receives a larger share.[32] When there are two wives, children of the second wife do not inherit personal property from the first wife; in addition, their inheritance share of common property is smaller than that of the children of the first wife.[33]

Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth

During pregnancy, a woman is prohibited from performing certain tasks, such as digging or filling up holes or tying knots.

Abortion is rarely practiced among the Bahnar.

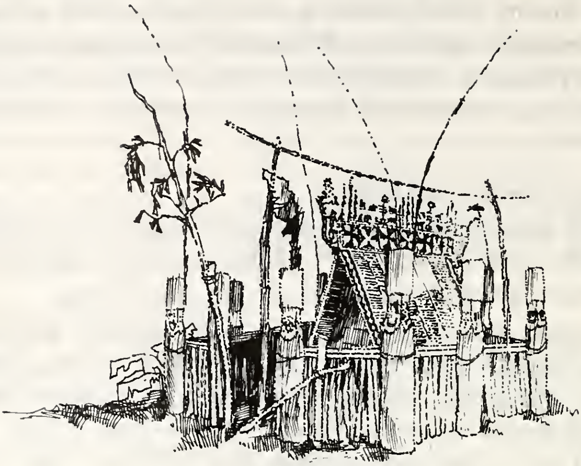
A married woman gives birth in the house near the family hearth, where a fire is kept burning. Delivery is aided by a midwife. The husband and small children may remain in the house, but adolescent boys stay in the communal house until the baby is born. An unmarried girl must give birth outside the confines of the village in the forest in order to avoid offending the spirits.

Naming the Child

At birth the baby is given the name of an unattractive object to drive away harmful spirits. The formal naming ceremony, *hlom don*, is performed shortly thereafter; the tribespeople do not consider the infant human until the hlom don ceremony has been completed.[34] In this ritual, the midwife among the Western Bahnar or the mother among the Eastern Bahnar blows into the infant's ear saying, "I blow into your ear and you must be . . ." and then listing the qualities and aptitudes she hopes the child will possess. The parents then choose a permanent name for the child, which by Bahnar custom does not indicate the family or sex and does not duplicate the name of any other living person in the village.[35]

Child-Rearing Practices and Education

When children are 5 or 6 years old, they are usually given the duty of caring for the poultry yard. A few years later, they are given the additional job of looking after the buffaloes. Little by little, the boy begins helping his father in his work, and the girl starts assisting her mother. Children are not restricted in their behavior, nor are they segregated by sex, until they reach the age of puberty. The youngest child, regardless of sex, is expected to stay at home to care for the parents and help cultivate their land. This child may



Bahnar tomb

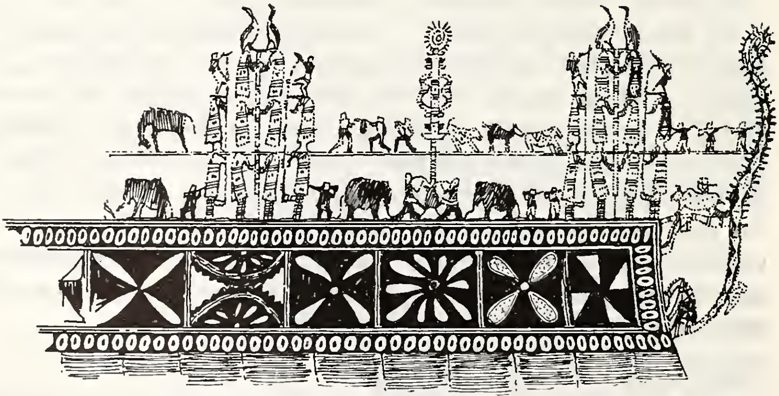


Figure 3. Bahnar tomb and detail of tomb decoration.

not marry before the parents' death but is then rewarded with a larger share of the inheritance.[36]

An orphan is cared for by a guardian, generally one of his uncles, who protects the child's goods and inheritance until he reaches maturity.[37]

In addition to the informal education of the home environment, there are local schools operated by the Vietnamese Government and missionary groups in the larger, more permanent settlements. In the former, the children are taught the Vietnamese language; in the latter, they are taught their own language.

Puberty Rites

Traditionally, when boys and girls reached the age of 14 or 15, the puberty rite of filing the upper teeth was performed.[38] The lower jaw was protected by a piece of wood while the upper teeth were filed with a piece of basaltic stone. After the filing, the mouth was washed out, and the teeth were rubbed with gum from the *long hot* or *long nghik nhong* plant until the teeth were black and the pain had subsided. This custom may be dying out among the Bahnar.

When boys have reached the age of puberty, they are considered able to help their fathers effectively, and they sleep in the communal house until marriage. During this period they continue to eat their meals in their parents' house and sleep there when they are sick.[39]

Death and Burial

Death in a family occasions a series of ceremonies which terminate with the abandonment of the tomb.

Before the funeral, gongs are played at the house of the deceased, and the body is wrapped in mats. For the burial, customarily held at nightfall about 20 to 30 hours after the death, a funeral procession is formed. The gong players lead the procession, followed by the deceased, carried by bearers. The family of the deceased follows, wearing white clothing as a sign of mourning.

At the cemetery, the body is placed in a coffin. The surviving spouse or the oldest member of the family turns his back on the tomb, throwing dirt and pieces of wood over his shoulder onto the coffin. On top of the grave the men place jars and various implements, depending upon the sex of the deceased. Sometimes carved wooden statuettes of men or animals, varying from 2 feet to 5 feet in height, decorate the graves. The Eastern Bahnar paint their statues red and blue.[40]

The period of mourning ranges from 6 months to 3 years in duration. During this period, the surviving spouse is restricted in social activity and must remain loyal to the deceased until the abandonment of the tomb. During the abandonment of the tomb ceremony, gongs are played and animals sacrificed. This rite marks the final separation of the deceased from the living, thereby ending the mourning period and its restrictions.[41]

System of Measurement

The Bahnar system of measurement is based on visual rather than abstract concepts. Distance overland is measured by the number of nights the tribesmen must sleep en route to their destination. Other measurements are determined by capacity or length, rather than by weight; for example, a buffalo is measured in terms of the length of its horns. Daytime is measured by the position of the sun. Nighttime is from sunset until the first crowing of roosters in the morning. The day of the month is reckoned by the phases of the moon.

The Bahnar numerical system includes the following words for the numbers from 1 to 10 and 1,000:[42] 1=*ming*; 2= *bar*; 3=*pong*; 4=*puon*; 5=*podam*; 6=*todrou*; 7=*topoh*; 8=*tohngam*; 9=*toxin*; 10=*jit*; 1,000=*robau.*

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Customs and taboos vary from village to village in the Bahnar area. A degree of modification in adherence to tribal rituals has been noted, and change is more pronounced among the Eastern Bahnar than among the Western Bahnar. Within the Bahnar territory, change can be attributed chiefly to the contact of the tribe with outsiders and the influence of tribesmen returning from military service.

Tribal Folklore

The oral literature of the Bahnar comprises stories of legendary history, love, and warfare. In addition to the myths concerning the origins of the tribe, other stories reflect certain ideals of physical beauty for the most part alien to the tribesmen themselves. In these stories, men and women are described as having smooth white skin, long limbs, slender waists, and long hair. The narration of stories and legends provides entertainment and relaxation after dark when the day's work is done.

Dress

Although the Bahnar occasionally wear ready-made, cotton Western clothes purchased from the Vietnamese in Pleiku, their usual costume is a loincloth worn by the men and a skirt worn by the women. In cool weather, the men also wear a blanket wrapped around the body; the women, a sleeveless cotton blouse.[1] From the Jarai, the Bahnar buy cotton for their articles of clothing.

Variations of the basic Bahnar costume are found among the subgroups. Among the Bonam, the men wear a loincloth and a jacket made from the bark of the *cong* tree. On festival days, a turban is added to their traditional costume.[2] The women wear skirts and long-sleeved coats made from dark-blue cloth with white stripes, adorned with many buttons. Men and women alike wear glass-bead necklaces and copper or silver bracelets. The bracelets are several large rings welded together; the size and number of bracelets worn indicate the person's wealth.[3] Among the Roh and Tolo subtribes, the fabric for making clothing has red stripes which run lengthwise.

In the Krem subgroup, clothing has distinctive features. The ankle-length *yeng*, a woman's garment wrapped around the body, is usually black, with a few stripes, although it may have white flowers with a few blue or red dots for decoration.[4] There are also two kinds of women's coats: a short, sleeveless one for festival and holiday use, dark blue in color, with two blue and white flowers woven on the chest; and, for daily use, a three-quarter length white coat. Krem men wear black loincloths with white stripes. For warmth as well as for protection against arrows, men wrap themselves in long striped blankets, which are also used to cover the body when sleeping. For festivals, holidays, and market days, both men and women wear pointed turbans adorned with flowers and small bells. The men's turbans are usually made of brightly colored cloth, while the women's are black. In addition, small bells are worn around their waists, wrists, and ankles. The Krem also wear strings of glass beads and silver bracelets similar to those worn by the Bonam.

Folk Beliefs

Believing that trees, rocks, animals—in fact, all their surroundings—are inhabited by spirits, the Bahnar guard against committing acts which might offend the evil spirits. The spirits are believed to communicate through dreams and omens such as rainbows, halos around the moon, unidentifiable noises, or sneezing. The Bahnar will not work after dark for fear of evil spirits.[5]

The tribespeople believe that animals have an awareness of the world of the spirits; animals are believed to see and hear things that human beings cannot. Thus, the Bahnar consider actions of animals as omens: if a pig snaps at his drinking trough or a dog howls, someone may die. Some animals—the tiger, the elephant, and the rhinoceros—are influenced by the spirits more than others. These animals possess no magical powers of their own but are associated with magic derived from a spirit. For example, the tribesmen fear the tiger not only for the physical danger, but also for a mysterious power associated with it.[6]

The Bahnar also fear strangely shaped trees or trees with unusually large limbs.[7] Once they feared the helicopter and performed sacrifices at its wheels to ward off harm to the village. Reportedly the Bahnar have overcome this fear; the helicopter has become associated with the arrival of food and medical supplies.

In the performance of their daily activities the Bahnar are usually restricted by tribal taboos. Silence should be maintained when tribesmen go to hunt, to war, and to find honey. A warrior may not bathe the night before going off to war, nor may a hunter eat tomatoes, eggplant, wild bananas, or meat before departing for the hunt.[8] Women do not eat dogs, snakes, or mice because the Bahnar believe these animals cause sterility.

In addition, some villages place limitations on particular activities and foods. For example, in one village the tribespeople may wear black cloth but may not weave it. In another village, those who own a pig may not go out of doors for 2 to 3 days after the birth of a litter the number of which is larger than the owner's family.[9]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

Anyone not belonging to the toring—the territorial administrative unit comprising several villages—is considered a tomoi, or stranger. Treatment of tomoi varies with the local history of antagonism and warfare. However, a visitor from another village with which there is an alliance will be treated as a guest, will be welcomed in the common house, and will be offered wine to drink. Visitors with large beards have special appeal to the Bahnar because they fit the tribal ideal of masculine power. Fair white skin and rosy cheeks are also highly regarded by the tribespeople.

Although reportedly reserved and taciturn towards strangers, the Bahnar do welcome guests and invite them into the common house for a meeting with the people. In some Bahnar subgroups, depending on the wealth of the village, wine is served.[10] The tribespeople are hospitable; however, outsiders are considered as a possible danger to the relationship between the villagers and the spirits. Any misfortune occurring in the village while outsiders are there will be attributed to them.[11] To prevent a stranger from stealing a Bahnar's spirit the tribesman licks his thumb and brushes it over his heart.[12]

Traditionally, an outsider wishing to settle in a Bahnar village had to locate his house just inside the fence surrounding the village. The villagers would observe him and would watch for signs of the spirits' displeasure, such as crop failure or sickness. If, after 2 or 3 years, no harm resulted from his presence, the outsider would be permitted to settle nearer the center of the village. This settlement practice may have been modified in recent years.

Eating and Drinking Customs

Ordinarily rice is cooked only for the first meal of the day; however, if unexpected guests arrive, more rice is prepared. Cooked rice is served in areca leaves or in baskets with salt.[13] Other foods prepared include manioc leaves and roots, cabbage, and leaves of a vegetable called *ranh*. Customarily, the Bahnar do not use eating utensils; they prefer to eat with their fingers.

Special preserved or pickled foods, prepared for guests and festivals, include fish, meat, and manioc leaves. The preservation of fish or meat involves salting, covering the food with leaves, and allowing it to age. Manioc leaves are pounded, salted, and placed in jars to ferment. These preserved foods, as well as boiled chicken, are considered delicacies and are served only when honored guests are present.

A variety of wines and water are the principal beverages. Wines are generally prepared by fermenting paddy (unhusked rice), rice, millet, manioc, and potatoes. The drinking of wine is believed to bring the tribesmen into a more favorable relationship with the deities and therefore plays an important role in ceremonies and festivals.* During ceremonies, the tribespeople gather around a jar of wine, an elder tribesman offers a prayer, and then a long straw for drinking the alcohol is passed from person to person. Singing often accompanies this ritual.[14] The Bahnar drink water from wells or springs which, traditionally, have been carefully guarded against pollution.

Customs Relating to Animals

Domestic animals are usually raised in pens or small huts near the house. Buffaloes—which are neither yoked for work nor stabled—are tied to trees at night for safekeeping.

The Bahnar religion requires the offering of many sacrifices in accordance with prescribed and traditional procedures. The buffalo is the most important sacrificial animal; goats, pigs, chickens, and eggs follow in order of descending importance. Sometimes goats may be substituted for a few, but not all, of the buffaloes required for a large sacrifice. The liver and blood of a sacrificed animal are reserved for the spirits of the ancestors.[15]

Animals are also used as a measure of value: prices and fines are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, pigs, or chickens. Buffaloes needed by an individual or a village for sacrificial purposes may be obtained through trade.

---

* See "Religious Ceremonies," p. 30.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The Bahnar believe that spirits inhabit all parts of their world—all animate and inanimate objects. Living in constant interaction with these spirits, the tribesmen continually attempt to appease the spirits and to avoid actions which might anger them and bring misfortune upon the tribesmen.

According to the Bahnar, the universe is divided into three worlds. The first world consists of the earth, plants, animals, men, and the stars. The second world is that of the *kiak*, or ancestors, and includes any objects or sacrificed animals which have been placed on the tomb of the deceased. The third world is that of the spirits.

Spirits may be invited to enter the first world; for example, certain spirits are invited to Bahnar celebrations or sacrifices. Spirits also have the power to enter the first world uninvited: a spirit may appear as an apparition. Man contacts the ancestral spirits in the second world through dreams. The Bahnar believe that when a man dreams, his essence, *po'hngol*, enters the second world and comes into direct contact with the kiak, who may either help or harm him. Dreams, therefore, are of great significance to the Bahnar.[1]

Principal Deities

The Bahnar deities are the spirits of the third world. These are called *yang* for males and *ya* for females. To indicate respect, male spirits are addressed as *bok* in prayers.[2] Spirits of the third world are thought to have their own property—houses, beasts, and personal objects. They may leave their world to enter the first world to receive offerings due them.

Principal Religious Holidays

The three major Bahnar festivals are the new year's festival, which occurs during the 1st or 2d month of the lunar year; a 4-day festival before the land is cleared for cultivation; and a 7-day festival after the crops have been harvested.[3]

At festivals, the Bahnar sacrifice buffaloes and various other animals; they then eat the meat and drink wine. Reportedly, in recent years the number of Bahnar festivals has been declining.[4]

Religious Ceremonies

Every act in the lives of the tribesmen is ruled by their religion. Bahnar patterns of religious behavior encompass many taboos and sacrifices* and are passed from generation to generation. Religious observances, although some local variations exist, are generally the same for all the subgroups.[5]

Any violation of the religious rules of conduct is considered to offend both the ancestors and the spirits of the third world and to cause sickness or misfortune. The site of the offense and any witnesses are also stained. A man is responsible to the spirits for offenses committed in his home by his relatives and by his ancestors.

Sacrificial ceremonies are always conducted by the person who offended the spirits. *Phah* are brief sacrifices, and *soi* are full-scale sacrifices to powerful spirits. When a sacrifice is offered—whether in a house, at a tomb, or in a field—the liver and blood of an animal are presented to the spirits. After a prayer to the spirit, the celebrant drinks from a jar of wine and then passes the straw to his wife and to the other members of the family group. In addition to the sacrifice of atonement, a purification rite must be performed before the daily routine can be resumed.

Tribesmen are careful not to arouse the spirits. To clear a field, they will first break off a few branches to see if the spirits object; if no sign appears, they can clear the land. To avoid offending the spirit of the rice, the women do not grind more rice in the morning than the family will eat during that day.[6]

Religious Practitioners

The offering of a sacrifice involving an offending individual is performed by that person, whether male or female, rather than by a special religious practitioner. However, if the person is too sick to offer the sacrifice, a substitute of the same sex and same household is permissible.[7]

Sacrifices celebrated on behalf of the village are held in the communal house, or in front of it. The village elders lead the wine-drinking ritual, followed by the household heads and the other village men. Women do not participate in village sacrificial rites.[8]

Sacrifices connected with the construction of a new house are conducted by the man designated as the household head, assisted by his wife. The household head also conducts agricultural ceremonies; after he has pronounced an invocation to the spirits, his wife sips the wine, and then she passes the drinking straw to the other members of the household.[9]

---

* See "Health and Personal Hygiene," p. 12; "Marriage," p. 16; and "Death and Burial," p. 23.

Missionary Contact

The Catholics have had a mission in the Bahnar area since the middle of the 19th century. Reportedly, in 1940 there were approximately 25,000 Catholic Bahnar. These tribesmen have modified, but have not abandoned, their traditional tribal rites. The Protestant Christian and Missionary Alliance also has a mission in the Bahnar area; however, little is known about its activities.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Bahnar have a subsistence economy based upon agriculture. Their primary occupation is the cultivation of upland rice by the slash-and-burn technique. The plot of land or *ray* is farmed for approximately 3 or 4 successive years and then abandoned. The land is allowed to remain fallow to regain native vegetation, while the Bahnar move to new land; at a later time, they return to cultivate the fallow field. The cultivated rays are not necessarily near the village; they may be located some distance away as the nearby soils become exhausted.

New sites and locations for rays are chosen by the headman, usually together with the village elders and a sorcerer. The vegetation is inspected to determine the prevailing soil conditions.

Some occurrences—for example, dreams of particular animals or the appearance of certain birds on the site—are regarded as signs indicating whether the land will be fertile. In the case of adverse signs, the tribesmen may consider an area taboo and will not cultivate it.

Early in the dry season or late in the wet season, the trees—except for the largest—are felled, leaving stumps of about 1 to 2 feet. The dense vegetation is cut to the ground and allowed to dry in the sun before the burning time—usually a month before the next heavy rains begin. After a field is burned and has cooled, the tribesmen clear the debris, leaving only boulders and stumps. The layer of fine ash from the burned vegetation is subsequently washed into the soil by the rains. When the first rains loosen the soil, the men make holes for the seed rice with dibble sticks; the women follow, planting and covering the seeds. Except for some weeding done during the growing season, the land is then left without further attention until the harvesting.

During the dry season brush fires are started to clear away the forest around a dwelling, allowing the new grass to sprout, providing food for the cattle, and enabling the Bahnar to track down and hunt animals more easily.

Upland rice is the most important and the preferred crop. Secondary crops, including corn, squash, yams, cucumbers, eggplant, and tobacco are grown in the rays in alternate rows with the rice or after the rice harvest, or in kitchen gardens. The corn and squash are commonly used to feed the livestock; however, if the rice yield has been low, these vegetables supplement the diet of the tribespeople.

The Bahnar diet is further varied by shoots, edible leaves, fruits, and herbs collected by the women. The women also turn up the earth with a sharp stick or small hoe to find edible roots and tubers. With the help of dogs, they catch lizards, rats, snakes, squirrels, and birds. The women also gather pitch from trees to be used as a fuel for illumination.

The Bahnar supplement their basic subsistence with hunting, fishing, and a limited amount of trade. The tribesmen like fresh meat and soups made from the entrails and blood of animals. Formerly they depended much more on hunting than they do at present. Many areas with game have been taken over by outsiders, and game, once plentiful, is now becoming scarce.[1] Only the men engage in hunting, and most tribesmen possess great skill in tracking and stalking game.

Pigs, chickens, and goats are raised primarily for blood sacrifices in various tribal ceremonies, but are occasionally slaughtered for food. Buffaloes are also kept primarily for sacrificial purposes.*

The villagers also fish. A method frequently used involves drugging the marine life by placing a narcotic in the water. Men, women, and children alike help to haul in the netted fish. Another method—catching and scooping up the fish in baskets—is used only by the women and children.

Special Arts and Skills

The Bahnar engage in numerous crafts, skillfully using simple tools. Basketmaking is the chief craft and is carried on to some degree in every village. Bahnar baskets, very well designed and executed, are woven from very thin strips of rattan. Bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood are woven into matting, partitions and walls for buildings, traps, pipes, nets, weapons, and containers for water, salt, and tobacco. Most of these articles are made in the communal house by the bachelors of the village. The women make pestles and some fishing baskets. Customarily, only men build tombs, coffins, and boats; men also gather honey from wild beehives. Some men are also skilled blacksmiths, while others specialize in repairing nets and gongs.[2]

The women weave coarse, colorful cloth of cotton, ordinarily using four sets of threads shuttled through a light weaving loom simply constructed from several pieces of wood. The fiber from which the thread is made is seldom grown locally—it is frequently obtained in trade with the ethnic Vietnamese.

---

* See "Customs and Taboos," pp. 25–28.

Local handicrafts reportedly are declining because the tribesmen can obtain through trade imported articles similar to those previously made in their villages.[3]

Exchange System and Trade

Although they have recently become acquainted with a monetary system, the Bahnar still depend heavily upon a barter system of trade. Prices are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, jars, gongs, weapons, clothes, and other objects.

The Bahnar trade animals and forest products, especially alleged aphrodisiacs, with other tribal groups and with the ethnic Vietnamese. In return, the Bahnar obtain salt, metal goods, cotton, gongs, and jars.[4]

Property System

Land ownership is reckoned by toring associations, an arrangement under which the territory within several villages is collectively administered by these villages. A toring controls collectively the farming, hunting, and fishing rights of the villages within its territorial boundaries; however, the toring does not serve as a political unit. Outsiders, whether Bahnar or not, are expected to obtain permission from the elders of the toring association to engage in any activity governed by the toring.

Although land is not owned by individuals or families, cultivators of a particular field—whether the field is currently in use or fallow—are recognized by the villagers to have a preemptive right to that specific area. These rights are well known and respected within the toring association.[5]

Ownership of property by individuals and by married couples was discussed earlier in this study.*

Distribution of Wealth

Although money is becoming increasingly important to the tribesmen, wealth is usually measured in terms of buffaloes, gongs, and jars.[6] Most villages have several wealthy families who constitute the sociopolitical elite. Servants usually work a year for a rich family and in return receive food, housing, clothing, and sometimes a small sum of money. The wealthy also employ agricultural workers, who are paid a portion of the harvest.

---

* See "Social Structure," pp. 15–24.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The village is the highest political unit among the Bahnar; there is no political organization at the tribal level. Comprised of several villages, the toring appears to function largely for the administration of fishing, hunting, and farming rights, with no apparent political implications.

A Bahnar village is best described as an association of extended families having common interests and often interrelated. Political authority is exercised by a council of elders and a village headman, the *kra*; the former is composed of elders—the oldest male household heads in the village—and the latter is elected by the elders. Usually the position of kra is handed down from father to son; nevertheless, formal election by the elders is necessary.

The traditional responsibilities of the council of elders and the kra include the administration of the village, the protection of its inhabitants, and the organization of village rituals.[1] The kra also represents the elders in affairs outside the village.

The authority of the elders and the kra is limited within the village by the power and influence of the eldest males of the various extended families. Family problems are resolved by the family heads, while violations of village customs and conflicts between families and between villages are handled by the village elders.

During the French administration, Bahnar functionaries were selected from the influential families of a toring. The position of district chief was often held by a Bahnar, while the resident province chief was usually French.[2] The Bahar continue to draw a sharp distinction between traditional headmen and those functionaries who emerged under the French rule.

The Vietnamese Government supervises relations between tribal villages. A Government representative works with each group of seven or eight villages; the villages, in turn, are represented by their headmen.

Legal System

Traditionally, tribal laws were unwritten: taboos and sanctions were known and respected by all tribal members. There is a strong spirit of conformity in each village, the sanction of the community acting as a deterrent to violators. Resolution of disputes and determination of punishment for violations are the affairs of both family and village. For example, if the relationship of a boy and girl creates talk, the elders may inform the couple of the villagers' dissatisfaction.

Under the French, a special system of courts was established on the village, district, and provincial levels to adjudicate tribal matters. A village court had jurisdiction in the village, passing sentence on local matters. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction; these court members handled only tribal matters.[3]

Under the French, cases unresolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened the first 7 days of every month. The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. In judging the cases before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[4] Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but the Vietnamese Government has been taking action to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Government efforts to politically integrate the tribespeople into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this decree, courts responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards, will be established at the village, district, and province levels.[5]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[6] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved, thus eliminating the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be reached, the case may be referred to a higher court.[7]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court will include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[8]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[9]

Subversive Influences

The main objective of Viet Cong subversive activity in the Bahnar area is to divert tribal support and allegiance from the Government to the Viet Cong. Other important Viet Cong objectives in the Bahnar territory are to control Routes 14 and 19 and to maintain supply lines through the Bahnar area.

The usual Viet Cong method of subversion is infiltration and an attempt to win the confidence of the whole village or its key individuals. The subversive elements identify themselves with the villagers by helping with village and family projects and by giving medical aid. A thorough knowledge and observance of tribal customs help the Viet Cong gain the confidence of the tribespeople. For example, Viet Cong agents have been known to file their upper teeth in the Bahnar manner to identify themselves with the tribesmen.

After the suspicions of the villagers have been allayed and their confidence won, the subversive elements begin an intensive propaganda program directed against the Vietnamese Government. Individual tribesmen are then recruited and trained for various support or combat missions with the Viet Cong.

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong often resort to extortion and terror in an attempt to intimidate the tribespeople. The Viet Cong may coerce the Bahnar into passive support so that they refuse to cooperate with the Vietnamese Government; or the tribespeople may be forced into active support as laborers and sources of materiel.[10]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of information dissemination in the Bahnar area is word of mouth.

No information is available at this writing concerning the number of radios in the tribal area or the degree of Bahnar familiarity with them. However, radios are probably no less rare among the Bahnar than among other tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam. Any radios operating in the Bahnar area could pick up broadcasts from Saigon and provincial radio stations.

Wherever feasible, short movies in the Bahnar language covering simple subjects could be an effective means of communication.

Written communication might be effective, since the Bahnar do have a written language devised by missionaries. A limited number of the Bahnar tribesmen can read, and they could communicate the information contained in written materials to the other tribesmen. Information concerning the use of printed materials was not available at this writing.

All information should be oriented toward the principle of improving conditions among the Bahnar as villagers, rather than as individuals, because the tribesmen have a strong communal feeling. Information programs should be couched in terms familiar to the tribesmen; they should be connected with projects explicitly beneficial to the village to elicit cooperation. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and community development are possible themes.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Bahnar religious, social, and cultural traditions. Because of the Bahnar political structure, all initial contacts should be made only with the tribal elders and the kra. It is also essential to psychologically prepare the Bahnar to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village oriented and prefer to remain isolated in their traditional way of life, the Bahnar respond most favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasizing ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, political ideology, or individual benefit. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained: the Bahnar resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of the Bahnar into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and some attempts to educate the Bahnar tribesmen. These programs have not been wholly successful because of the isolation of the tribesmen, their traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese, their stubborn adherence to traditional ways, and Viet Cong interference by subversive agents.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in planning and implementing projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by the Central Government or by foreigners.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness. Projects using familiar materials and products, as much as possible, are more easily accepted by the tribesmen than projects requiring the use of unknown materials or devices.

3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Bahnar encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
   b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
   e. Control of insects and rodents.
   f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
   d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   a. Improve village sanitation.
   b. Provide safe water supply systems.
   c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   a. Provide basic literacy training.
   b. Provide basic citizenship education.
   c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Bahnar have a reputation as skilled and capable fighters, both offensively and defensively. They pride themselves on their skill as hunters. The Bahnar are capable scouts, trackers, and guides, and if given intensive modern training, support, and leadership, they could become exceptionally effective in jungle combat.

The territory inhabited by the Bahnar is one of the most strategic in the Republic of Vietnam. Viet Cong supply lines run through the Bahnar area, and the presence of the Viet Cong in comparatively large numbers is a constant factor in the day-to-day lives of the tribesmen. The Bahnar have been forced, under threat of terror and reprisals, to give the Viet Cong support in the form of food, finances, and labor. When the tactics of subversion, propaganda, and simple cajolery fail to subdue the Bahnar, the Viet Cong resort to murder and other brutalities.

Although the Bahnar have a reputation for being aggressive and canny fighters and reportedly display initiative and sophistication in defending themselves, they are often coerced into cooperating with the Viet Cong. Unless given Government training and support, the isolated Bahnar do not have the means and backing to withstand Viet Cong hostility.

Organization for Defense

The Bahnar village has a traditional organization for defense against surprise attack. The communal house, normally used as the sleeping place for the bachelors of the village, is in addition a stronghold for defense in terms of warfare conducted with lances, knives, and crossbows. From the communal house, the Bahnar warriors can effectively defend the village. Formerly, Bahnar villages were surrounded by a stockade, but in recent years these have been replaced by fences. Due to increased military activity within the area, more secure perimeter defenses are probably now employed.

The Bahnar determination to defend themselves is strongly influenced by their estimates of probable success. If faced with superiority in numbers or weapons, the Bahnar may capitulate rather than fight. This characteristic is not unique to the Bahnar;

rather, it is common among people inadequately armed, trained, and led.

Inclination to Fight Aggressively

Although the Bahnar prefer defensive to offensive warfare, they have a reputation for engaging in aggressive warfare if provoked. They have reportedly been capable of mounting well-organized attacks on distant villages.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

The Bahnar have traditionally relied upon spears, swords, crossbows, and poisoned arrows as weapons. They are also well acquainted with the use of traps, pits, and spiked foot traps (concealed sharpened sticks). Some Bahnar have been trained in the use of modern weapons and have had military instruction from the French, Vietnamese, and Americans.

Because of their relatively small physical size, the tribesmen are more comfortable and adept with small light weapons than with heavier ones. The tribesmen can handle large weapons that are easily disassembled and quickly reassembled. Traditionally, the Bahnar take good care of their weapons; if they can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, they will generally use it well.

The Bahnar are less proficient in the use of more sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, because of their difficulty in understanding the more theoretical and technical aspects of timing and trajectory.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

Like other tribal groups, the Bahnar learn more readily from actual demonstrations of techniques and procedures than they do from standard classroom methods. Tribesmen with military service under the French are an asset in the training and instruction of younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE BAHNAR

Every action of the Bahnar tribesmen has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Bahnar may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesmen, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Bahnar are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Bahnar village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Bahnar. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process, requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. No immediate, important decision should be asked of an individual Bahnar. An opportunity for family consultation should always be provided; if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
7. Tribal elders and the appointed village chiefs should receive credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Bahnar should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used, because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. A gift or invitation to a ceremony or to enter a Bahnar house may be refused by an outsider as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
4. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Bahnar ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
5. An outsider should never enter a Bahnar house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior.
6. Outsiders should not get involved with Bahnar women.
7. The Bahnar are generally eager to learn; however, teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible, identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Bahnar believe all objects in their world house spirits.
3. Do not mock Bahnar religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Bahnar life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Bahnar property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Difficult, rigorous work should be done in the morning, from dawn to 10:30 or 11:00 a.m. The Bahnar are accustomed to eating their main meal around 7:00 to 8:00 a.m., and this should be taken into consideration when planning the morning's work.
3. Learn simple phrases in the Bahnar language. A desire to

learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Bahnar are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Bahnar areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964, and revised edition 1965), p. 20.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21; Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), p. 395; Guy Morechand, "Folklore musical jarai et bahnar," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), p. 357; Moc Huong [Lam Ngoc Trang], *Customs and Mores of the Bahnar People* (Hue: Department of the Army Translation I-1330, 2198515, 1960), p. 2.
6. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.* pp. 20–21.
7. H. C. Darby (ed.) *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), p. 56; Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, July 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]
8. Kopf, *op. cit.;* Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–81.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 4; Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 94.
2. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
3. Rev. David Frazier, Interview, May 1964. [Missionary; 5 years of service in Vietnam, mostly among the Bahnar.]
4. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.
7. Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois, jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), p. 133.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
12. Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
13. Bourotte, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 97–99.

15. Frazier, *op. cit.*
16. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
17. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
19. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 500.
20. H. Parmentier, "La Maison commune du village bahnar de Kombraith," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), p. 223.
21. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
23. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Notion de beauté du corps humain chez les Bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), pp. 251–52.
2. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
3. Frazier, *op. cit.*
4. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 402.
5. Frazier, *op. cit.*
6. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 523.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
8. Frazier, *op. cit.*
9. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, pp. 411–12.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 403.
12. Frazier, *op. cit.*
13. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13.
14. Frazier, *op. cit.*
15. *Ibid.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, pp. 483–85.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 516–21.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 513–15.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 408.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 483.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 459.
7. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34.
8. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 407.
9. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
13. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 413.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 461.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 459.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 460.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 459–61.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 457.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 466.
22. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 479–80.
23. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 480.

24. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–36.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
26. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 461.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 475.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 466.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 475.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 479.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 471–72.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 472–73.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, p. 464.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 481.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 526–27.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 442–43.
42. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), p. 967.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Frazier, *op. cit.*
2. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–24.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
5. Frazier, *op. cit.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 438.
9. Frazier, *op. cit.*
10. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
11. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 409.
12. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, pp. 421–22.

VI. RELIGION

1. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, pp. 398–406.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 425.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 442–44.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 444–47.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 429–31.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 431–36.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 442–43.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Kopf, *op. cit.*
2. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, pp. 521–23.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 522.
4. Kopf, *op. cit.*

5. Gerald C. Hickey, "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965), pp. 1–5.
6. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, p. 522.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *op. cit.*, pp. 499–509.
2. Paul P. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum* (Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952), pp. 18, 85–88.
3. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
4. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
5. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.
11. Frederic Wickert, "The Tribesmen," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959), pp. 126–31.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No Footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No Footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

No Footnotes.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE BAHNAR

No Footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois, jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie*, Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Dourisboure, Pietro X. *Dictionnaire bahnar-francais.* Hong Kong: Imprimerie de la Société des Missions Étrangères, 1889.

———. *Les Sauvages bahnar.* Paris: Tequi, 1853.

Frazier, Rev. David. Interview. May 1964. [Missionary; 5 years of service in Vietnam, mostly among the Bahnar.]

Guerlach, R. P. J. B. "Chez les sauvages Bahnar," *Missions Catholiques*, XVI (1884), 22–24, 32–34, 40–41, 55–57, 69–71, 81–83, 100–102, 119–20, 393–94, 404–08, 416–18, 428–30, 435–37, 453–55, 464–66.

———. "Chez les sauvages bahnar-reungao (Cochinchine orientale)." *Annales de la Société des Missions Étrangères*, XXX (1902), 289–99.

———. "Les Funérailles chez les Bahnar." *Annales de la Société des Missions Étrangères*, XXXIV (1903).

———. "Mariage et cérémonies de noces chez les Bahnar," *Annales de la Société des Missions Étrangères*, XXIII (1901).

———. "Moeurs & superstitions des sauvages ba-hnar," *Missions Catholiques*, XIX (1887), 441–44, 453–54, 466–68, 477–79, 489–91, 501–04, 513–16, 525–27.

———. "La Variole chez les sauvages bahnars, reungaos, sedangs," *Missions Catholiques*, XXV (1893), 617–21.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "Contribution à la connaissance de l'économie des populations attardées: L'Économie des Moi de l'Indochine," *Revue Indochinoise Juridique et Économique* (1944), 68–124.

———. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum.* Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

———. *Dictionnaire bahnar-francais.* Unpublished work, in collaboration with Father Alberty of the Missions Étrangères.

———. "Une Forme originale d'organisation commerciale: Les Démarcheurs bahnar," *Revue Indochinoise Juridique et Économique*, 1938.

———. "La Notion de beauté du corps humain chez les Bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), 251–56.

———. "Recherches sur les croyances des tribus du haut-pays d'Annam, les Bahnar du Kontum et leurs voisins, les magiciens," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 9–33.

———. "Le Sacrifice du buffle chez les Bahnar de la province de Kontum: La Fête," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hue,* II (1942), 118.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. *Material on Kontum Province.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, March 17, 1965.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Huong, Moc [Lam Ngoc Trang]. *Customs and Mores of the Bahnar People.* Hue: Department of the Army Translation I-1330, 2198515, 1960.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. July 1965. [Ph.D. candidate Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Maurice, A. "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 135–39.

Morechand, Guy. "Folklore musical jarai et bahnar," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXVI (1951), 357–83.

Navelle, E. "Étude sur la langue bahnar," *Excursions et Reconnaissances,* XIII (Saigon: 1887), 309–15.

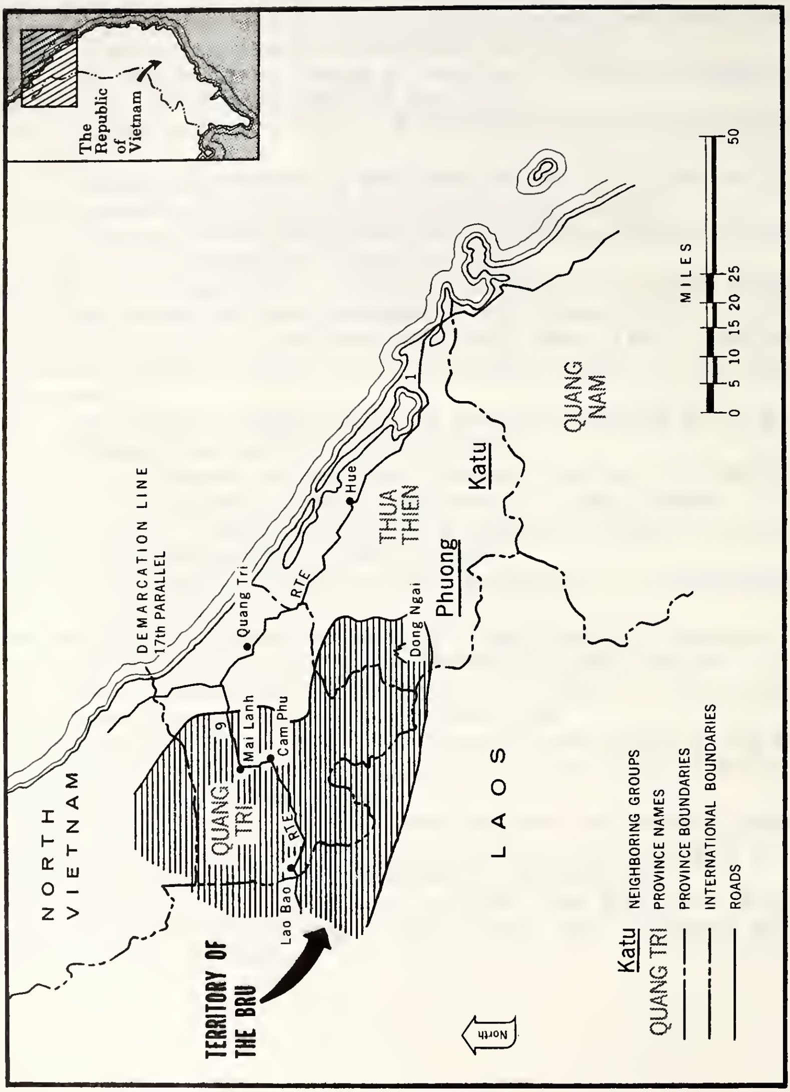
Parmentier, H. "La Maison commune du village bahnar de Kombraith," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 223–24.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N. C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964, and revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of State. *Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam.* (Department of State Publication No. 7839). Far Eastern Series 130, February 1965.

Wickert, Frederic. "The Tribesmen," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 126–35.


The Republic of Vietnam
NORTH VIETNAM
DEMARCATION LINE
17th PARALLEL
Quang Tri
RTE
Hue
1
9
Mai Lanh
Cam Phu
Lao Bao
RTE
QUANG TRI
THUA THIEN
QUANG NAM
Dong Ngai
Phuong
Katu
LAOS
TERRITORY OF THE BRU
North
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
Katu NEIGHBORING GROUPS
QUANG TRI PROVINCE NAMES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
ROADS

The Bru.

CHAPTER 2. THE BRU

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Bru, the most northern of the Montagnard tribal peoples in the Republic of Vietnam, inhabit an area on the borders of the Republic of Vietnam, Laos, and North Vietnam. Bru tribesmen live in isolated, autonomous villages in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, in Laos, and in North Vietnam. They have no central tribal political organization.

The Bru language belongs to the Mon-Khmer language family and is related to the languages of the Hre, Cua, Bahnar, and Sedang.

Bru society is patriarchal and lineage and inheritance follow the male line.

Name and Size of Groups

Also called the Brou, Ca-Lo, Galler, Leu, Leung, Van Kieu, and Muong Kong, the Bru are estimated to number between 40,000 and 50,000 persons.[1] Approximately 26,000 to 38,000 Bru tribespeople live in the Republic of Vietnam: 8,000 to 20,000 in the Huong Hoa District of Quang Tri Province,[2] 8,000 in the vicinity of Lao Bao[3] on the Laotian border, and about 10,000 in the area of Cam Phu.[4] Some Bru are also found in North Vietnam and Laos, but population estimates were not available for the tribespeople in these two countries.

Terrain Analysis

The Bru in the Republic of Vietnam inhabit the Annamite Mountains west of Quang Tri in the area near the 17th parallel. They may also inhabit a plateau region, Kha Leung, located to the west of the Annamite Mountains in Laos. Other Bru are found north of the 17th parallel in North Vietnam.

The Annamite Mountains are of folded limestone, with steep declivities on the eastern or coastal side and a more gentle slope on the western or Laotian side. The rugged terrain makes travel through these mountains very difficult; generally, travel routes through the montains follow the rivers.

Several high mountain peaks dominate the rough terrain of the Bru area: north of National Route 9 are Dong Sa Mui (about 5,240 feet) and Dong Voi Mep, also called Dent du Tigre (about 5,820 feet). In the southern Bru area, Quang Ngai (about 5,750 feet) dominates National Route 9.

The mountains south of the Bru region, below Hue, are overshadowed by the gigantic Massif de l'Ataouat which rises to about 6,960 feet.[5]

Two major rivers, the Bo Dien and the Han Giang, flow east from the mountains into the China Sea. In its upper reaches, the Han Giang is also known as Song Quang Tri and Da Krong. The Se Pone River flows west out of the Bru area into Laos.

National Route 9, the major road crossing the Bru area, extends inland from Dong Ha, following the Bo Dien River. At Mai Lanh, the highway turns south to follow the upper reaches of the Han Giang River, then it winds through a mountain pass just south of Dong Voi Mep; finally at Lao Bao the highway enters Laos, paralleling the course of the Se Pone River. For centuries the course of Route 9, determined by the nature of the terrain, has been the principal egress from these mountains to the coast. Part of this journey, from just west of Huong Hoa, is commonly made by water down the Han Giang River to the coast at Quang Tri.[6] In crudely made dugout canoes, the Bru navigate the many mountain streams and small rivers.

The climate of the Bru region is affected by both the summer (May–October) and winter (November–January) monsoons, which provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In summer, these winds blow mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the rain brought by the summer monsoon. Precipitation is high, averaging over 60 inches in the lower elevations to more than 150 inches in the higher elevations and on some slopes. Normally the weather is warm and humid, but the temperatures in the mountains are generally lower than those along the coast.[7]

The high and relatively evenly distributed precipitation gives this area rain forest vegetation of two distinct belts. At the higher elevations is the primary rain forest, where the trees, with an average height of 75 to 90 feet, form a continuous canopy. Below this canopy are smaller trees of 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this type of forest and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, the forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.

The second belt or secondary rain forest, which develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated, is more extensive in this area. In this forest the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: the Malayo-Polynesian and the Mon-Khmer. In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Bru belong to the Mon-Khmer grouping.

Indochina has been a migratory corridor for centuries, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the Upper Mekong Valleys, whence they migrated through Indochina.[1]

Language

Scholars classify the language spoken by the Bru as a subgrouping of the Katuic branch of the Mon-Khmer language family. Thus, the Bru language is closely related to that of the Katu tribe and is somewhat different from the languages of the other Mon-Khmer tribes like the Bahnar, Sedang, and Jeh.

Some Bru tribesmen speak Vietnamese or French, and recent resettlement programs have probably encouraged more Bru to learn Vietnamese. Since few Vietnamese can speak the Bru language, French and Vietnamese serve as the administrative languages in the tribal area.

Some Bru tribesmen, especially those from villages in or near Laos, can speak Laotian, and a few understand English, having learned it from U.S. personnel working in the tribal area.[2]

The Bru have never had a written language. In recent years, however, missionary groups have endeavored to design a phonetic form of writing in order to translate religious works into the Bru language.[3]

Legendary History

The Bru share with many highland tribes a complex oral tradition. All their legends, laws, customs, stories, crafts, folklore, and proverbs are transmitted orally from generation to generation. Perpetuation of this mass of information with unvarying detail suggests a highly developed skill in memorization. Stories probably have a rhymed or poetic form to aid memory or for dramatic effect.

Bru legends are usually told around the hearth at the end of the day's work. The most important Bru legend, given below, recounts the creation of man and the story of a great flood.

In the beginning God (Yuang Sorsi) created a man and a woman, who lived together very happily. Every day they hunted wild animals and looked for fruit. Only one thing troubled them—they had no children. One day, as they wandered in the woods, God met them. He promised to give them children.

God's promise was fulfilled, and the woman gave birth to eight sons at one time. Now they were more troubled than before: for as the children grew, they ate more and more, until the parents were unable to support them. In desperation, the parents took the children to a high mountain and abandoned them.

Later on, one of the young brothers acquired a precious, beautiful sword, which had remarkable powers: when the handle was grasped securely, rain would fall; when the blade was held, the sun would shine.

One day the young lad with the sword became very hungry, so he went looking for food. On the bank of a river he saw a fig tree and a civet cat was eating the figs. He asked the civet cat for something to eat. But the civet cat said, "This is not your kind of food. If you want to eat these figs you will have to become a civet cat like me." He brought out a civet cat skin, which the boy put on, becoming a civet cat, eating figs, and sleeping in the shade of the tree.

The chief of that area was Anha. One day, while his youngest daughter was paddling a canoe along the river, she came to the place where the fig tree stood and saw the civet cat beneath it. She took the civet cat home as a pet, and the animal—the boy in disguise—was very happy to go.

God spoke to Anha the chief telling him that a great flood was coming and commanding him to build a boat. Although the chief tried to hire workers to help him make the boat, no one was willing, not even to escape a flood. When the boat was finished, Anha took his family into it. With him were his wife, four daughters, and two sons—eight people in all, as well as the civet cat which the youngest daughter took with her. God commanded the civet cat to grasp the precious sword by the handle several times. A violent rainstorm followed; it rained for 8 days and 8 nights. The water rose, destroying everything on the earth. The water rose up to the heavens, and the fish nibbled at the stars.

Then the flood receded and the land dried. Anha's youngest daughter fell in love with the civet cat, realizing that he was actually a person. She asked her father for permission to marry him. At the wedding ceremony, while the buffalo was being barbecued, the civet cat removed his disguise, which his bride threw into the fire. In the place of the civet cat was a handsome young man who lived thereafter with his wife, the youngest daughter of Anha.[4]

Factual History

Prior to 1897, when they were pacified by the French, the Bru lived in relative independence in their isolated mountain villages.

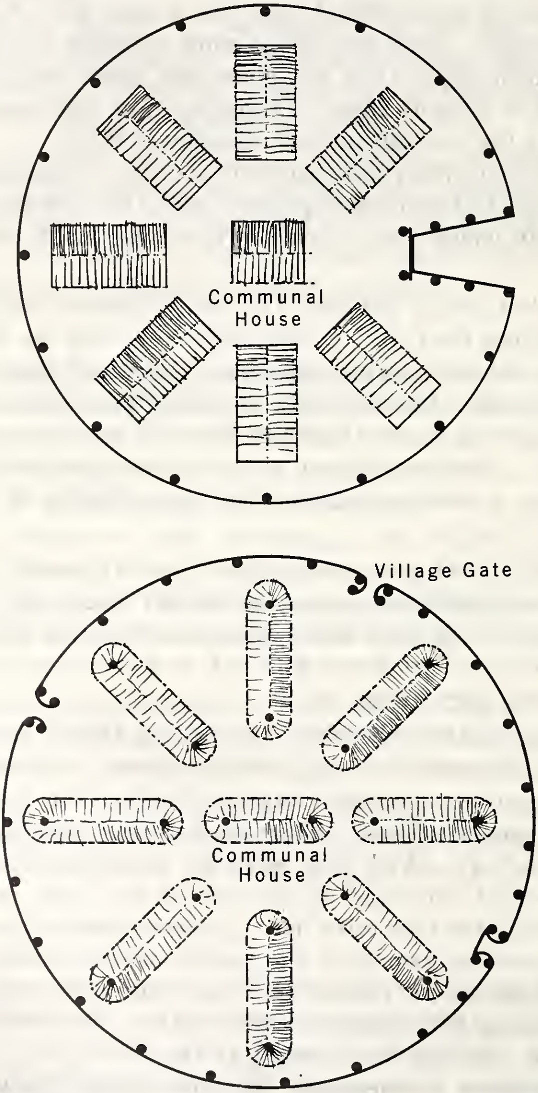


Figure 4. Layouts of Bru villages.

The Bru region was important to the French as a safe route to Laos. Under French administration Bru villages were required to pay a small tax.

Little factual information had been reported about the Bru until about 1965. In 1965, the Vietnamese Government resettled many Bru tribesmen, removing them from their remote areas to villages located in a 3-mile strip on each side of National Route 9. Thus the Bru were taken away from areas where Viet Cong pressure might force the tribespeople to assist Viet Cong forces.[5]

Settlement Patterns

Except for the resettlement dwellings along National Route 9, the Bru live in isolated mountain villages near pure water sources. From time to time, villages are moved as the land becomes worn out.

Houses in a Bru village are arranged in an oval or circular pattern around a central common house or *khoan,* which is used for religious sacrifices. Erected on pilings about 6 or 8 feet off the ground, the houses have a framework of bamboo poles covered with woven bamboo panels and roofs thatched with grass.

Bru architecture seems confined to two basic styles: the simplest style is a structure with a small entrance platform on one side, which is actually a place from which to mount elephants; the other design is a rectangular house with the platform extending from a central doorway. This platform is flanked by two other doors accessible by ladders. No dimensions are available, but each dwelling probably houses several nuclear families.[6]

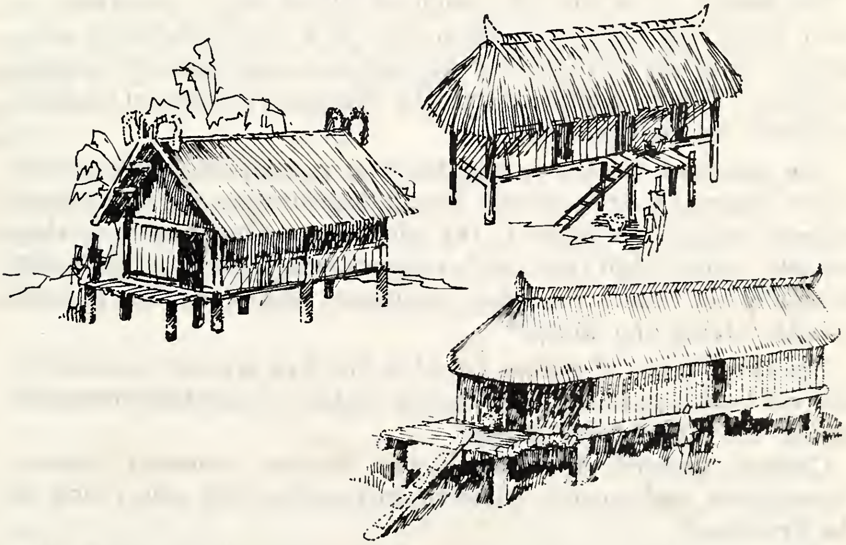


Figure 5. Bru houses.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Bru tribesmen are small, their height varying from 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 4 inches, their average weight being about 115 pounds. They are strongly built and well muscled, have high cheekbones, wide noses, dark brown eyes, light brown skin, and black hair.[1]

The faces of both men and women are tattooed and their upper front teeth are filed down almost to the gum. Earlobes are pierced and stretched to permit insertion of wooden or pewter plugs or ornaments. Sometimes large clumps of cotton are worn in the earlobe.[2]

The Bru pull their long, black hair into a chignon at the back of the head. Bru women sometimes wear the chignon in a tight spiral knob on one side of the head rolled in a colored cloth turban like a crown. One lock of hair is occasionally allowed to hang down the back.[3]

Health

The health of the Bru who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate (7 out of 10 infants die) and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene practices are rudimentary.

The principal disease among the Bru is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal area. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal. The other, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[4]

The three types of typhus found in the Bru area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among the Montagnard tribes.[5]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentary, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the Bru area.[6]

Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and sexual hygiene.[7]

Since the Bru believe evil spirits cause sickness, they think that only sacrifices to the spirits can cure an illness. Bru sorcerers—men or women—determine through divination the spirit responsible for the illness and the kind of sacrifice necessary to cure the afflicted person.[8] A satisfactory sacrifice may be a chicken, a pig, or a buffalo, the offering varying according to the circumstances involved.

Psychological Characteristics

Within the context of their own culture, the Bru are a hardworking and intelligent people. They are, however, not accustomed to working regular hours at the same job; rather, they accomplish their tasks in sustained bursts of effort. For example, in clearing forests to prepare fields for planting, they work hard and long. These periods of intense activity may be followed by periods of idleness when nothing urgent must be done. To an outsider accustomed to regular hours of work, this pattern of activity might be interpreted as laziness, but it is actually the result of the agricultural nature of Bru life.

Like other highland tribes, the Bru are psychologically enmeshed in a strong tradition of specific rules for all aspects of human behavior. From the earliest childhood the tribesman is reared according to these rules.

The belief that the spirits will punish any violation of the customary rules adds force to the code of behavior; the Bru live in constant fear of punishment by the spirits. Each catastrophe in their marginal existence with possible fatal results, such as a crop failure or an epidemic, is regarded as punitive. During every moment of his life, the Bru is alert to pertinent omens from the spirits.

The Bru thinks in terms of the village or family rather than in terms of the individual. He considers how an action may affect his family and village before thinking of the results to himself. For this reason, he may sometimes not act or make decisions until he has consulted his family and village leaders.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Bru social structure is based upon the extended family and the village, not upon the clan or tribe. Bru society is patriarchal: the eldest male is the head of the family and the male members of the family inherit all property. Kinship is patrilineal—the children bear the paternal rather than the maternal name—and the residence is patrilocal—married couples live with the husband's family.

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

There are the usual distinctions between the roles of men, women, and children in Bru society. The village and the family are headed by the eldest, usually the wealthiest, men, who handle all village and family affairs and fight when and where necessary. The men also hunt, fish, and clear the land.

In Bru society women must submit to the authority of the men. The women's duties include carrying water, cutting wood, cooking, caring for domestic animals, weaving cloth, and guarding the fields. They also help the men clear the land and sow, harvest and husk the rice.

Children are wanted and loved in Bru society. When they are about 5 or 6 years old, the children join in adult activities. Boys hunt and fish with their fathers and learn the names and uses of plants, the use of the crossbow, and the sounds of the forest. Girls stay with their mothers to help with the domestic tasks and look after the younger children. All children learn the traditions of the tribe and the behavior required, but the children receive very little discipline.

Marriage

Most Bru men have only one wife, but a man is permitted as many wives as he can afford. When a young man decides to marry, usually at age 15 or 16, his relatives meet the girl's parents to discuss the payment to her family—usually a number of buffaloes, pigs, and jars. When a bride price is agreed upon, the group sets a wedding date.

On the morning of the wedding day, the groom pays the bride price to the bride's family. During the marriage ceremony, animals are sacrificed and much rice wine is consumed by everyone present. If full payment has been made by the groom, the newly married couple move into his family's house; otherwise, the couple live with the girl's parents until the entire bride price is paid.[1]

The village elders have authority to grant a divorce, which may be initiated either jointly or separately. After listening to the complaints of the couple, the elders fix payment and decide on property disposal. To obtain a divorce over the opposition of the husband, a wife must repay all or part of the original bride price. If a wife agrees to the husband's request for a divorce, the elders fix the amount the husband must pay to the wife. Adultery is seldom the basis for a divorce; however, should a divorce be granted on these grounds, the elders require the guilty party and the lover to pay the wronged spouse a large alimony. The younger children of a divorced couple remain with the mother, while the older children are sent to live with the father's family.[2]

Birth

From the first signs of pregnancy until the sacrifice following the birth of the baby, a pregnant Bru woman is forbidden to enter any village except her own. She works at her customary tasks until labor pains begin. Whether Bru women give birth in the village or in the forest is not known. One source says Bru women deliver alone in the forest. Other sources state that the women are attended by elder relatives during labor and delivery.[3]

Birth is a joyous and important event for the entire Bru village. While the woman is in labor, the villagers prepare a celebration. When the child arrives, the villagers offer a sacrifice to the spirits and drink rice wine. If delivery is difficult, sacrifices are made in the hope of getting assistance from the spirits.[4]

Childhood and Education

Children are not weaned until they are about 4 years old. Both boys and girls begin participating in typical adult activities by the age of 5 or 6. Boys hunt and fish with their fathers; they learn to shoot crossbows and to identify the forest sounds and wild plants. Girls stay with their mothers and look after younger children and learn to help with other female tasks. At an early age boys and girls learn the Bru traditions.

When young boys and girls approach the age of puberty, their upper front teeth are filed down to the gums. This painful operation marks the end of their childhood.[5]

Death and Burial

When a Bru dies, the villagers join the family in lamentations over the body, which is wrapped in cloth and tied up in a mat. For wealthy tribesmen or elders, a coffin is usually made from a section of a tree, split and hollowed out. For several days relatives and friends lament over the body, occasionally singing funeral chants. During this time the village is taboo to outsiders.

Following the lamentations, the coffin or mat-wrapped body is buried in the forest in a grave 3 or 4 feet deep. Articles such as clothing, pipes, and jewelry are placed in the grave with the body. When the grave is covered with dirt, a sacrificial ceremony is held.

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Bru activities are regulated by numerous customs and taboos. Prescribed methods and procedures govern everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Bru have passed down these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Tribesmen who are in regular contact with Vietnamese and Americans may not observe their customs and taboos as closely as do the tribesmen living in greater isolation from outside influences.

Dress

Bru dress, like that of other highland tribes, is quite simple. Men wear a loincloth and occasionally such articles of Western clothing as T-shirts or army surplus jackets. Women wear embroidered skirts, wrapped around the waist and extending to just below the knees, and sleeveless jackets decorated in front with parallel rows of coins. In cold weather both men and women wear blankets over the shoulders. Much of the clothing material is woven by the women, who also prepare their own dyes. Blue is a favorite color for the designs worked into the cloth.[1]

The women wear jewelry such as coin and bead necklaces, brass-wire bracelets and necklaces, rings, ear plugs, and long earrings which may consist of as many as five chains looped from ear to ear under the chin.[2]

Folk Beliefs

The traditions governing Bru behavior fall into three groups: prohibitions against mentioning certain words or subjects; taboos or prohibitions whose violation requires sacrifices to placate offended spirits and to restore harmony; and pronouncements of the proper use of certain objects.

Taboos and prohibitions are numerous. For example, when sleeping inside a house, a tribesman must not point his feet toward any religious objects, such as statues woven of bamboo.[3]

Eating and Drinking Customs

The cultivation and handling of rice—the staple of the Bru diet

—have religious implications for the tribespeople. Each phase of the agricultural cycle is marked by sacrifices to insure the fertility of the soil and a good crop. This also applies to the unhusked rice or paddy; for example, the paddy is not allowed to burn or to fall into a fire. No one may speak while detaching the grains of rice from the stalk.[4] Every morning the women husk a fresh supply of rice with mortar and pestle.

The Bru diet includes herbs, plants, and vegetables. Vegetables grown in kitchen gardens are not considered sacred. Forest herbs and plants are gathered by the women, and at an early age each Bru learns which plants are edible or useful.

Meat and fish, though not eaten at each meal, are also important in the Bru diet. Animals, such as pigs, chickens, and buffaloes, are raised primarily for sacrifices, but the tribesmen do eat them after the sacrifice. Animals killed by hunters are shared by their families with other villagers.

Water is the ordinary beverage of the Bru, but for ceremonial occasions a fermented rice wine, brewed in large old jars, is drunk. During animal sacrifices, all tribesmen present, in order of their importance, take turns drinking rice wine through a long straw. Unless all participants drink, the sacrifice is not effectual because the spirit has been offended.

Customs Relating to Animals

The buffalo is considered to be the prime sacrificial animal, while pigs and chickens are adequate for less important sacrifices. The Bru believe that the spirits consider the buffalo to be representative of man. Buffaloes have names and are considered members of the village.

During a sacrifice, the buffalo represents the grievances or desires of the family, household, or village. The eating of the flesh of the sacrificed buffalo (which is divided among the spirits, family, and village) represents a kind of communion uniting them all.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

Religion plays a dominant role in the lives of the Bru. Their animistic religion involves belief in a host of good and evil spirits. Although details of the religious tradition may vary from village to village, the fundamental beliefs and practices are similar throughout the Bru area.

Principal Spirits

The most important spirits are the spirit of the sky, the spirit of the paddy, and the spirit of the village. Other spirits are associated with the sun, moon, earth, thunder, and such terrain features as mountains, patches of forest, and prominent rocks. The Bru believe spirits also inhabit animals, rice wine jars, the family hearth tools, an household objects. The communal house located in the center of the village is sacred to the spirit of the village. If offended by a villager violating a law or taboo, all spirits, good or evil, are believed able to cause misfortune in the form of accidents, illness, or death.[1]

Religious Ceremonies

The principal religious ritual is the sacrifice of animals. To gain favor with a particular spirit, thus obtaining more benefits from him; to placate spirits after a law or taboo has been broken, thus preventing crop failure, epidemics, and other misfortunes for the village—these are the principal purposes of the sacrifice.

Religious sacrifices vary from offering an egg to the slaying of a buffalo. Village elders conduct sacrifices affecting the village as a whole, while family and personal rites are the responsibility of the family or the individual concerned.

The sacrifices themselves involve a number of rites: an invocational prayer intended as an invitation to the relevant spirits to attend the sacrificial ceremony and as an expression of the wishes of the person making the sacrifice; the ceremonial slaying of an animal (chicken, pig, or buffalo); the offering to the spirits of the blood and flesh of the slain beast by displaying them in bowls, along with rice and other foods; and the drinking of rice wine and the eating of the sacrificial animal. The Bru believe that the spirits partake of the offering in the bowls, the rice wine, and the cooked meat.

The best sacrifice that can be offered is a buffalo. The attendant rituals are elaborate: first, in an area near the communal house, specially decorated poles are set up and the buffalo is attached to them. Armed with lances and long knives, the Bru circle the beast, singing and dancing to the accompaniment of gongs and drums. After a while the men circling around the buffalo begin to slash at the tendons in the animal's hind legs. When the tendons have been severed, the buffalo falls upon its side.

For several hours the people keep jabbing the buffalo with their weapons, intending only to irritate, not to kill it. Then more severe blows punish the buffalo and it is eventually killed. The animal is then cut up, and parts of it offered to the spirits, while other parts are divided among the participants.

Major Bru sacrifices are associated with the agricultural cycle —clearing the forest, planting the rice, and harvesting the crops.

Religious Practitioners

Every Bru participates actively in sacrifices. Apparently there are no special practitioners or sorcerers. Invocations or prayers to the spirits are usually made by the elders of the village or elders of the family. If the sacrifice is being offered by only one or two persons, they take care of all the ritual requirements.[2]

Missionary Contact

Although both Protestant and Catholic missionaries have been active in the Bru area, few tribesmen have been converted to Christianity. Viet Cong attempts to kill one missionary couple drove them out of the Bru area. How much missionary activity is present in the resettled villages along Route 9 is unknown.[3]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Bru have a subsistence economy based primarily on dry rice cultivated by the slash-and-burn technique. Briefly, this technique involves cutting down during the winter months all vegetation in the new area and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as a fertilizer which makes the soil rich enough for 3 to 4 years of crops. Rice grown by this method depends solely on rainfall for irrigation. When the fields no longer support crops, the village moves to a new area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle. The village then repeats the slash-and-burn clearing process in the new area. Lands are controlled by the village but are cultivated by individual families.

Little information is available concerning other economic activities of the Bru. Rice production is supplemented by the cultivation of corn, and the Bru engage in some basket weaving.[1] Hunting and fishing also supplement the Bru diet.[2]

Exchange System and Trade

The Bru have traditionally bartered their goods either among themselves or with Vietnamese merchants in nearby market towns. In recent years, many Bru have been employed as laborers on coffee plantations and in U.S. military camps. These workers are paid in cash and thus are familiar with the Vietnamese monetary system.[3] The extent to which these tribesmen have introduced the use of money into their villages is not known at this writing.

In nearby market towns, the Bru use such items as surplus vegetables, fish, and baskets for trade; in return they receive salt, dried fish, eggs, rice, brown sugar, cloth, and beads.[4]

Property System

The village controls the land and allots it to families for the cultivation of crops. Game, though the property of the hunter, is customarily shared with all the villagers. Families own their houses, domestic animals, and household furnishings such as gongs and jars. Personal property includes clothing, pipes, weapons, and jewelry.[5]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The Bru do not have an overall tribal political structure: the village is the highest form of political organization. Occasionally neighboring villages cooperate with each other, but this does not represent political unity, for the villages remain autonomous and unite only briefly for some common (usually economic) end.

The Bru are under the administrative supervision of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. The Government appoints district chiefs who are responsible for tribal affairs in their area and who communicate Government policy to the village chiefs.

In the patriarchal society of the Bru, authority rests in the hands of the eldest male of each family. When a decision affects only one family, the family's own leader makes the decision. On matters affecting the whole village, the heads of each family in the village meet together as a council of elders.

The council of elders has jurisdiction over decisions concerning war, the moving of the village, great hunting parties, the settlement of conflicts between families, suitable punishment for serious violations of tribal custom and tradition, and the arrangement of the major sacrifices to the spirits.[1] When the village deals with outsiders, the wealthiest member of the council of elders usually acts as the chief and represents the village.

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a *rapprochement* between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government had supported a policy of permitting the Bru and other tribes to be separate administrative entities. Now, however, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

Legal System

Bru laws are part of their oral tradition and are, in reality, the rules, taboos, and prohibitions of individual behavior which might offend the spirits and bring down the wrath of the spirits upon the offenders or even upon the entire village. Because of their age and experience, the elders of the village interpret these laws and prescribe the punishment for their violation. Naturally, crimes which subject the entire village to the displeasure of the offended spirits are considered more serious than those which require the punishment only of an individual.[2]

The tribesmen believe that breaking a law upsets the harmony of the world by disturbing the spirits. Harmony can be restored only if the guilty person makes an appropriate sacrifice to the proper spirit and pays a fine to the village or to the family of the offended person.[3]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[4]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[5] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese law for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965 the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[6]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[7] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. The procedure will eliminate the right of appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[8]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[9]

At the national level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[10]

Subversive Influences

The primary objective of the Viet Cong is to win the allegiance of the Bru and to turn the tribesmen into an active, hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Generally, the subversive elements infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals. Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the next phase is an intensive propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Then individuals are recruited, trained, and assigned to various Viet Cong support or combat units.[11]

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror, which usually results in passive resistance to the Government or inactive support for the Viet Cong.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Bru area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning Bru familiarity with or access to radios. Any radios in operation in the Bru area were probably brought in by military personnel.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Bru language might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

Written communications might have some effect on the Bru. Although most Bru are illiterate, some of the tribesmen can read French and Vietnamese and could be expected to communicate information in written materials to the rest of the tribespeople. Data about the successful use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Bru should be oriented around the principle of improving the conditions in the tribal villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against harassment from the Viet Cong are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the Bru. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the tribal elders in order to show respect for the tribal political structure. The tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Most Bru tribesmen would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local or community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovation should be thoroughly explained; the Bru resent interference with their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Bru tribespeople into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.[1] Except for the resettlement programs in operation along National Route 9, these Government programs have not been very successful.

Creating and providing jobs for the Bru is reportedly a good method of keeping the Bru neutral or anti-Viet Cong. Gifts of rice and corn to the poorer villages have also been helpful.[2]

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging, but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunties to evaluate effectiveness.

4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, and tangible.
5. Projects should ideally lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Bru encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   - a. Improvement of quality of livestock through introduction of better breeds.
   - b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   - c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   - d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
   - e. Insect and rodent control.
   - f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   - a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   - b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   - c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
   - d. Construction of radio broadcasting and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   - a. Improve village sanitation.
   - b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
   - c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   - d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   - e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   - a. Provide basic literacy training.
   - b. Provide basic citizenship education.
   - c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Bru can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen can serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Bru can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership, they can be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat unit. U.S. personnel who worked with the Bru reported that the tribesmen were effective and loyal soldiers.[1]

In the past, the Bru were considered capable fighters, whether fighting offensively in raids against other groups or defensively within their villages. Recently some Bru have been trained by U.S. personnel and are familiar with U.S. operational techniques as well as modern equipment.

Hostile Activity Toward the Bru and Tribal Reaction

When psychological pressures to win Bru support fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. Frequently, the Bru yield to and cooperate with the Viet Cong; without Government training and support, they do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong. Except for the resettled communities, Bru villages have no able organization for defense. Bru villagers with adequate training and support have shown their willingness to defend themselves and will occasionally initiate aggressive action against the Viet Cong.

The inclination of the Bru to fight aggressively is one that must be developed and supported with modern weapons and training. They defend themselves vigorously when they, their families, or their villages are threatened and when they have adequate resources and chances for success.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

In the past, the Bru relied upon crossbows and spears. The Bru also are familiar with the use of traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks used as foot traps. Some Bru have received military training from U.S. personnel and are familiar with modern weapons. Their relatively small stature limits the type of weapons the

Bru can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning automatic rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled, carried by two or more men, and then quickly reassembled.

The Bru pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Bru can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

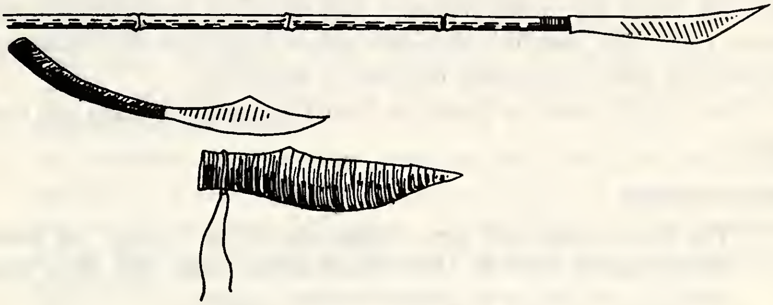


Figure 6. Bru weapons.

The Bru have difficulty handling sophisticated devices—such as mortars, explosives, and mines—as proficiently as hand weapons. They find the more abstract and technical aspects of such weapons—such as timing trajectories—difficult to absorb.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Bru can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Bru learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE BRU

Every action of the Bru tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Bru may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Bru are listed below.

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Bru village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village elders who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Bru. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Bru tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. No immediate, important decision should be asked of a Bru. An opportunity for his consultation with family and village elders should always be provided; if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
7. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some credit for civic action projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Bru should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a house may be refused by an outsider as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Bru ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Bru house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Bru women.
8. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not mock Bru religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Bru life.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Bru property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Outsiders should avoid entering Bru ricefields during the harvest season.
3. Learn simple phrases in the Bru language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Bru are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care

and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Bru areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.

2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and should have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. U.S. Information Service, *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands* (Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962), p. 17; Laura Irene Smith, *Victory in Viet Nam* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), p. 87.
2. U.S.I.S., *op. cit.*, p. 17; William J. Abbott, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965).
3. Exeley, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965).
4. U.S.I.S., *op. cit.*, p. 17.
5. Patris, "Le Relief de l'Indochine," *Extrême-Asie* (1933), pp. 306–307; H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 18–19.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–47.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. Exeley, *op. cit.;* S/Sgt. Carr, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965); Ronald Morris, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965).
3. Carr, *op. cit.;* Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
4. Bui Tan Loc, "Creation and Flood in Bru Legend," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIII (Summer 1961), p. 8.
5. Carr, *op. cit.*
6. J. Hoffet, "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Géographie*, LIX (1933), pp. 27–28; Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Morris, *op. cit.;* Exeley, *op. cit.;* Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
2. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
3. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
4. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–13.
8. Morris, *op. cit.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Noel Bernard, "Les Khas, peuple inculte du Laos français: Notes anthropométriques et ethnographiques," *Bulletin de Géographie Historique et Descriptive* (1904), pp. 355–56.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 356–57.
3. M. Georges Maspéro, *Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS: 13443) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962), p. 3.
4. Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 358.
5. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

VI. RELIGION

1. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7.
2. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
3. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 245; Abbott, *op. cit.*

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Hoffet, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–28.
2. Carr, *op. cit.*
3. Abbott, *op. cit.*
4. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 881.
5. Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 370; Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1086–87.
2. Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 371; Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1099–1105.
3. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1102–16.
4. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
5. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
6. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965).
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information, *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962* (Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962), p. 119.
2. Abbott, *op. cit.*

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Morris, *op. cit.*

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE BRU

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, William J. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

A-Chu. "Gone the Horrors of Death," *Jungle Frontiers,* XV (Summer 1962), 4.

Bernard, Noel. "Les Khas, peuple inculte du Laos français: Notes anthropométriques et ethnographiques," *Bulletin de Géographie Historique et Descriptive* (1904), 283–389.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Bui Tan Loc. "Creation and Flood in Bru Legend," *Jungle Frontiers,* XIII (Summer 1961), 8.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Carr, S/Sgt. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.) *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

"Doing Her Share," *Jungle Frontiers,* XV (Summer 1962), 11.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Exeley. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Fune, Jean. "Resettlement — Opportunities and Problems" *Jungle Frontiers,* XIII (Summer 1961), 2–3.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure" Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Hoffet, J. "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Géographie,* LIX (1933), 1–43.

Huyen, Nguyen Van. *Introduction à l'étude de l'habitation sur pilotis dans l'Asie du Sud-Est.* Paris: Librairie Orientaliste/Paul Geuthner, 1964.

Irwin, George. "From 'The Religion of the Dead' Comes Life," *Jungle Frontiers,* XI (Summer 1960), 4.

LeBar, Frank M., *et. al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Little, J. C. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Maspéro, M. Georges. *Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS:13443) Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962.

Morris, Ronald. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

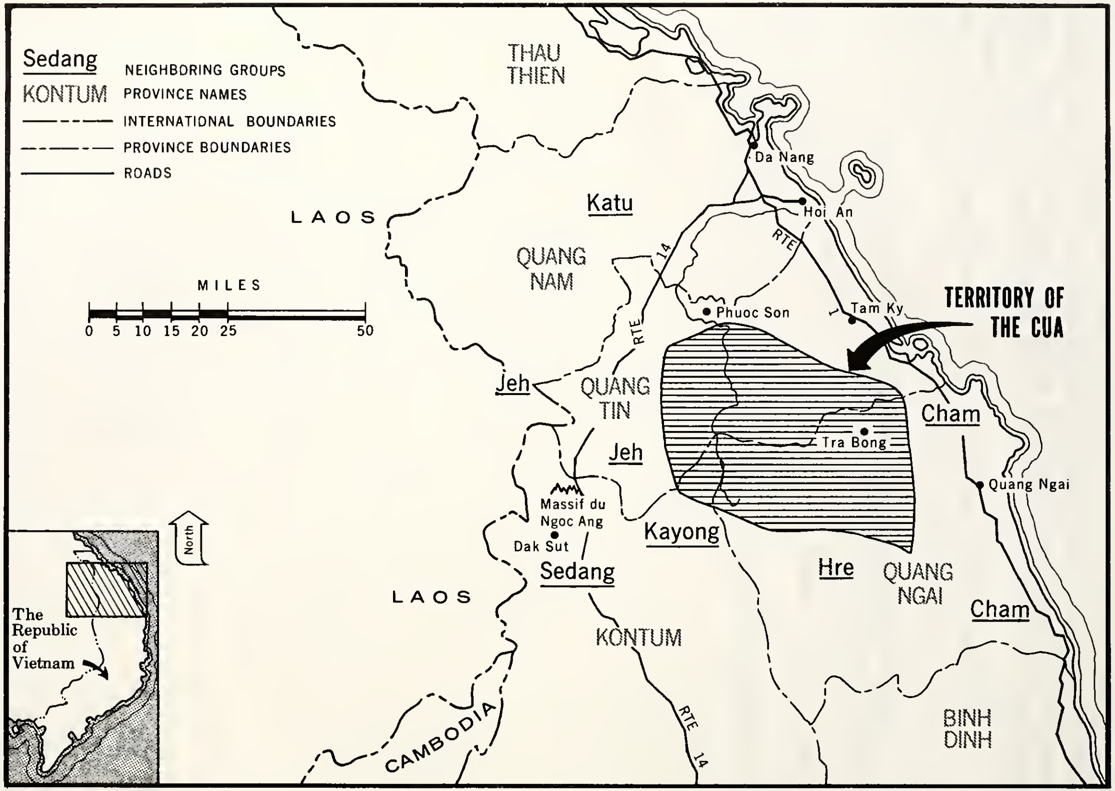
Patris. "Le Relief de l'Indochine," *Extrême-Asie* (1933), 306–307.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), 13.

Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information. *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954-1962.* Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962.

Smith, Laura Irene. *Victory in Viet Nam.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.

U.S. Information Service. *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands.* Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962.



Sedang NEIGHBORING GROUPS
KONTUM PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
North
The Republic of Vietnam
THAU THIEN
LAOS
Katu
QUANG NAM
Da Nang
Hoi An
RTE 14
RTE 1
Phuoc Son
Tam Ky
TERRITORY OF THE CUA
Jeh
QUANG TIN
Jeh
Cham
Tra Bong
Quang Ngai
Massif du Ngoc Ang
Dak Sut
Kayong
Sedang
Hre
QUANG NGAI
Cham
LAOS
KONTUM
CAMBODIA
BINH DINH

The Cua.

CHAPTER 3. THE CUA

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Cua, one of the least known Montagnard tribal groups of the Republic of Vietnam, inhabit the rough mountainous terrain of northern Quang Ngai Province and the south-central portion of Quang Tin Province. They have no central tribal political system nor governing force. Autonomous Cua villages form an identifiable tribal grouping through intermarriage and shared language, customs, and traditions.

The Cua language belongs to the Mon-Khmer language family and is closely related to the language of the Hre, the neighboring tribal group to the south.

Cua society is patriarchal, the lineage and inheritance follow the male line.

Name and Size of Group

Also known by Westerners as the Khua, Kor, and Traw, the Cua number between 15,000 [1] and 20,000 persons.[2]

The Cua should not be confused with the Cao, a subgroup of the Katu. The Katu are not contiguous with the Cua but are separated from them by the Jeh tribal group.

Location and Terrain Analysis of Tribal Area

The Cua inhabit the eastern portion of the area of the Annam Cordillera known as the Massif du Ngoc Ang. This massif is a series of rounded hills, primarily of shale, slate, and schist, with occasional isolated granite peaks, some of which are 8,000 feet high. The eastern part of the massif is flanked by a series of eroded plateaus.

East of the massif, the Cua inhabit the Tra Bong area of Quang Ngai Province and the Bong Mieu area of Quang Tin Province. These areas rise sharply from the narrow coastal plain and are cut by many narrow, steep river valleys with short and swift-flowing streams.

The Cua territory overlooks the lowland coastal regions and valleys inhabited by the Vietnamese, who are settled as far west as the market town of Tra Bong. On the western edge of the Cua area is the Jeh tribe, and to the south are the Sedang and Hre.

The climate of the region is affected both by the summer (May—October) and winter (November—January) monsoons. In the summer, the warm, moist, and unstable winds come mainly from the southwest and cause heavy local showers and thunderstorms. In the winter, a northeasterly airflow up the eastern slopes of the Annam Cordillera causes cloudy, rainy weather. Precipitation is high—averaging 120 inches in the lower elevations and more than 150 inches in the higher areas and on certain slopes. Normally, the weather is warm and humid, with the wettest season occurring during the summer. Clouds are frequent, especially during the winter months, and thick fog is common but is dispersed by the morning sun. Temperatures vary over 15 degrees between the summer and the winter seasons. Actual surface temperatures average 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in winter (January) and over 80 degrees in summer (July).

Severe typhoons rarely reach the Cua territory, although they have an important influence on the climate of the area. Mild typhoons occur between July and November and are usually preceded by high winds and cool, dry weather. When they do strike, they bring heavy rainfall that may last throughout the night and into the morning, causing floods and heavy damage, including the uprooting of forests.

Two types of rain forest, with vegetation of tropical broadleaf trees and bamboo, appear in two distinct belts. In the higher, more inaccessible regions is the primary rain forest, with tall trees that occasionally reach heights of 135 feet and form a continuous canopy. Below this canopy is a middle level of smaller trees and a third layer of seedlings and saplings. Orchids and other epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas, are also common. Little sunlight penetrates to the ground. Bamboo and rattan are particularly luxuriant along watercourses. Although from the air the primary rain forest appears impenetrable, it can be traversed on foot with little difficulty.

The lower areas and slopes to the east are covered with secondary rain forest, which develops where a primary rain forest has been cleared and then abandoned. The trees are small and close together, with heavy ground growth and abundance of lianas and other climbers. Only a few isolated high trees appear. This forest is difficult to travel, being impenetrable without constant use of the machete.

On the highest slopes of the area inhabited by the Cua, the only vegetation may be waist-high grass.

Few roads exist in the Cua area. One secondary road connects with National Route 1 at Tam Ky and runs through the Bong Mieu region, ending at the village of Tra My, where it becomes a track eventually reaching Kontum. Another secondary road starts at National Route 1 just north of Quang Ngai and goes west into Cua country for a short distance until it too turns into a track. Both of these roads were so damaged during the Indochina War that they are little more than trails. They are full of potholes and, during rains, provides channels for rushing torrents of water.

Trails are few in number and difficult, if not impossible, to sight from the air.

Rivers are short and often run through narrow, high valleys. They are, for the most part, unnavigable, although during high water small boats and canoes can be used on some stretches. During periods of high water, however, the occasional typhoons make water transportation even more hazardous.[3]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

In terms of language, customs, and physical characteristics, the Cua are a Mon-Khmer people. Indochina has been a migratory corridor from time immemorial, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the upper Mekong valleys, whence they migrated through Indochina.[1] The Cua are related to the Hre, Bahnar, and M'nong tribal groups.

Language

The Cua language has been classified as belonging to the Bahnaric subgroup of Mon-Khmer languages. Other languages in this subgroup are Bahnar, Sedang, Halang, Jeh, and Hre.[2] Cua appears to be more closely related to the Hre language than to any other.[3]

The Cua have no written form for their language, nor are there reports indicating such a form is being developed. The language is primarily monosyllabic, as are other Mon-Khmer languages, though polysyllabic words have been borrowed from other tongues. The language is atonal (tone does not influence meaning or grammar) but has a wide range of sounds.

Very few Cua have any knowledge of other languages. The tribesmen who trade regularly with the Vietnamese are reported to have a good speaking knowledge of Vietnamese.[4]

History of the Cua

No information was available concerning the legendary history of the Cua, and little is available on their factual history. It is known that the Cua have long inhabited the mountains and plateaus of central Vietnam. At least as early as the 11th century, they came under the domination of the Kingdom of Champa and figured in the perpetual wars between Champa, Annam, and Cambodia. Not until the reign of Le Thanh Ton of the Tran Dynasty of Annam (1471), when the Cham were decisively defeated by the Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese), did this domination relax. The Annamese had little to do with the tribal groups and only in the most peripheral way. Guard posts and military colonies were established in

Cua areas bordering the plains inhabited by the Annamese, and the Annamese engaged in some trading to obtain luxuries from the ribal area, such as medicines, herbs, aphrodisiacs, and elephants. Although the trade was for luxuries as far as the Annamese were oncerned, it was a necessity for the Cua tribesmen, who were wholly dependent on their settled neighbors for salt, iron, buffalo, ars, metal pots, and gongs.[5]

A yearly tribute was exacted by the Annamese Court, which assigned special traders, called *cac-lai,* to a specific tribal territory o collect the tribute. Occasional punitive expeditions were sent nto Cua country in response to tribal uprisings, but these expeditions were not successful in completely securing the area.

Early in the 19th century, when Gia Long acceded to the Annamese throne, the tribal areas took on added importance and the Annamese seriously undertook to pacify the tribes. Additional military forts were built, and the frontier area inhabited by the Cua was devastated in the fighting that ensued between the tribal peoples and the Annamese. As part of the Annamese pacification attempts, the border area was included in a new and special administrative unit, governed by the Annamese Court, which was not abolished until the French gained complete control over the tribal areas.

ettlement Patterns

The Cua usually build their villages along the slopes of hills. This is probably done both for protection and to escape the high humidity of the valley floors.[6] Cua villages practicing wet-rice farming—and these are but a small minority—are located at the foot of the slopes near their flat fields.[7]

All villages are near a stream or other source of water. The houses, built on piles, may measure over 70 feet in length. Beams

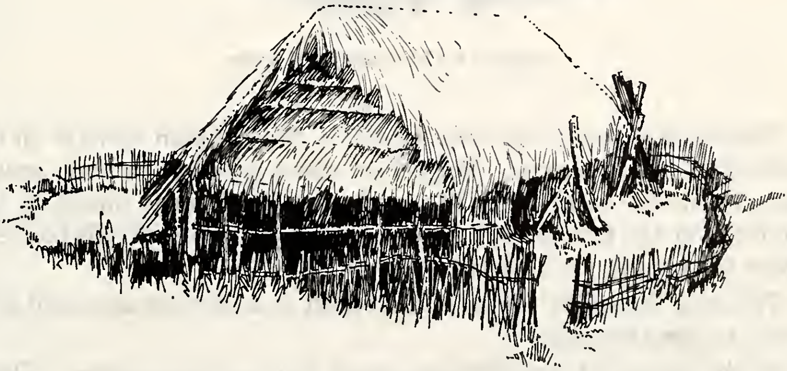


Figure 7. Cua house.

are usually of wood, the roof of a heavy bamboo thatch tied with rattan, and the walls and floor of braided bamboo.[8] In areas where the Viet Cong are active, houses are badly constructed and decrepit-looking, because new houses are inevitably burned down by the Viet Cong.[9]

Cua houses are entered by means of a notched pole which serves as a ladder. A long common room runs the length of one side of the house; the other side is divided into many small rooms, each occupied by a separate nuclear family. Each room has an open mud firebox which is used for heating, cooking, and smoking meat.[10]

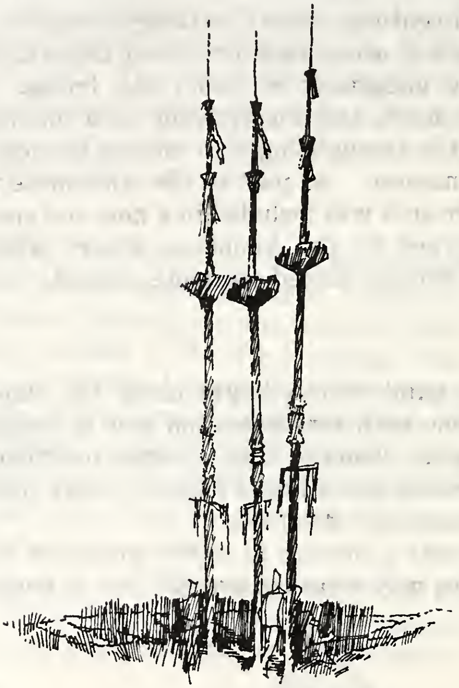


Figure 8. Cua sacrificial poles.

Household utensils are kept either in the common room or in the individual family rooms. Wine jars stand against the wall, spears and crossbows hang from the roof, and dried meat hangs in the smoke over the fireplaces.[11] Other household items include baskets, trays for sifting rice, hammocks, and gongs.[12]

The area below the house is used both as a storage area and as a place to keep livestock.[13]

In the center of Cua villages stand tall sacrificial poles. These are usually of stripped bamboo, sometimes painted with very ornate designs.[14] On ceremonial days, they are embellished with pennant-like ropes which are trimmed with white cotton.

Since most Cua practice slash-and-burn agriculture, they are semi-migratory; their villages periodically change location, but the moves are usually within a given area. Ordinarily the tribesmen remain in one place for 2 or 3 years—until the fertility of their fields is depleted—and then move to a nearby forested area where the land has regained its fertility. Village moves related to the clearing of new fields are always made within a given area, as the tribesmen return to reforested fields every several years.

Cua superstitions, especially those concerning epidemics and deaths, may also necessitate the abandonment of villages and the building of new ones at different sites. These moves are usually still within a given area but are less predictable than the regular shifts to new fields.

The Vietnamese Government's strategic hamlet program and military operations of subversive forces have also caused movements of the Cua population.[15]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Cua have a decidely Mongoloid appearance and a lighter colored skin than most other Mon-Khmer tribespeople. Their faces tend to be round, with full cheeks and wide-bridged noses, although long- and thin-faced tribesmen are seen.[1]

They are stocky and short in build; it is unusual to find a Cua more than 5 feet 2 inches tall.[2] They have black, deep-set eyes. Their heavy black hair, usually cut in straight bangs across the forehead, hangs to their shoulders in the back or is rolled up into a big bun held with a homemade comb. A few Cua have tangled curly hair. The hair is never washed, as these tribesmen believe they would die if they washed their hair.[3] Many Cua chew betel, which results in a dark discoloration of the teeth.

Health

The general state of health of the Cua is poor. Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and lack of sexual hygiene.[4]

Malaria is endemic in the Cua area; almost every tribesman has had the disease at least once during his lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal areas. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time, but is usually not fatal. The other, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[5]

The three types of typhus in this region are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Typhus is reported to be frequent among most of the tribes.[6]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis, veneral diseases, and smallpox are common in the tribal areas. Dysentery and yaws are significant causes of infant mortality.[7] Parasitic infections and various fungus diseases are prevalent.[8] Angular lesions (and resulting scars), goiter, and cheilosis (abnormal condition of the lips) are also common among the Cua.[9] Periodontal diseases are common and severe, resulting in the loss of teeth or in the teeth becoming too loose to be functional.[10]

There is widespread incidence of nutritional diseases, many indicated by distended stomachs, which are frequent among the Cua. A deficiency of thiamine, riboflavin, and vitamins A and C has been reported; but niacin, calcium, and iron intakes are reportedly satisfactory.[11]

The Cua believe illness is associated with evil or angry spirits and that treatment consists of various religious ceremonies and sacrifices. The details of such ceremonies apparently have not been reported.

Endurance

Like other mountain groups, the Cua display good endurance and can cover mountainous terrain swiftly on foot, although they are poor runners. The men can easily travel 40 kilometers a day on foot over difficult terrain carrying up to 20 kilograms. Under special circumstances, they can cover as much as 60 kilometers a day. The Cua are noted porters and commonly carry large loads:[12] from childhood on they carry huge bundles of green tea or cinnamon bark to sell in nearby market towns.[13]

Psychological Characteristics

The Cua are a most hospitable people and are not known to be especially warlike.[14]

They do not seem to be as attached to their villages as other tribesmen and may travel long distances from their villages.

Both men and women exhibit a certain flamboyance, as revealed in their choice of personal jewelry.[15]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The family and the village are the important social units among the Cua. There is no social organization at the tribal level. Very little information is available concerning the Cua society except very general statements.

Cua society is patriarchal; the women are considered to have lower status than the men. The extended family is the household unit, headed by the eldest male of the family. This household or family head also owns all the family property.

No information was available concerning Cua marriage customs. However, it is probable that the young bride goes to live with her husband's family, that marriage is not allowed between blood relatives, that the marriage ceremony is quite brief and simple, and that the Cua inter their dead.[1]

There is likewise no information regarding clan or class structure, birth and child-rearing practices, and burial customs.

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Dress

Clothes worn by the Cua may be either of the traditional kind or copied from Vietnamese and Western-style apparel.

Traditional dress for the man consists of a loincloth, an upper garment somewhat like a T-shirt but open at the back, neck bracelets and collars, often of beads, and perhaps a scarf or cloth wound around the head.[1]

A few men, especially those who live near Vietnamese settlements or who trade with the Vietnamese, wear ordinary Vietnamese clothing, including shorts, a white shirt, or a black tunic.[2]

The traditional dress of Cua women consists of a short, dark knee-length skirt or a fancier Cambodian-like *sampot* and a halter-like blouse reaching from the neck to the waist, leaving the underarms and back exposed. Occasionally, a cloth cape is worn around the shoulders. Many Cua women wear a cotton headband and a wide belt of beads around the hips. The belt is not unlike a Grecian girdle—wide at the back and tied in front.[3]

Cua beadwork is most unusual even among the Montagnard tribes. The women's bead necklaces are blue and are strung on string or circles of stiff wire. They are worn by the dozens, tier upon tier. Similiar beads of varied colors are worn around the ankles and encircling the hair. The wide belts are made of tiny, multicolored beads, usually composed of hundreds of strings.[4]

Men, too, wear beads around the neck. They also wear collars of polished or turned metal, as do many women.[5]

Both sexes wear earrings. The men wear long pointed earrings of pewter and fine black wire.[6]

Folk Beliefs

Because the world of the Cua is inhabited by innumerable spirits, a portion of them evil, the tribesmen have recourse to thousands of superstitious practices: they may be divided into two main classes —omens and taboos.

Omens exist in uncountable numbers and occur in the form of dreams or signs. All are supposedly warnings from a good spirit. Specific omens for the Cua are unknown. Incantations and invocations may be addressed to ancestors to prevent anticipated misfortunes.

Taboos are proscriptions directed at the village, the house, the fields, and the Cua themselves. Designed to prevent misconduct against both good and evil spirits, the proscriptions also include specific defenses against evil spirits. These taboos serve, essentially, to preserve traditional tribal customs. Taboos probably vary from village to village, but no specific information was available at this writing.

A broken taboo always calls for the propitiatory sacrifice of a chicken, pig, or buffalo, depending on the gravity of the violation.[7]

Eating and Drinking Customs

The staple food of the Cua is rice, supplemented by yams, manioc, corn, and edible plants gathered from the forest. This diet is varied with meat and birds hunted in the forests. Domestic animals (pigs, chickens, and buffaloes) are rare items in the Cua diet and are only eaten during sacrifices on special occasions.

Rice wine plays an important part in Cua life; it is drunk at all events, including festivals, sacrifices, and family reunions, and is customarily offered to guests.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The spiritual life of the Cua is very complicated despite an outward appearance of simplicity. It is believed that spirits, both good and evil, dwell in the objects of the physical world as well as in persons both living and dead. The problems of daily life are often associated with these spirits, which must be appeased with offerings. These religious beliefs are expressed in formal ceremonies and in the routine acts of daily life.

Certain trees, animals, and other natural objects are held in reverence because the tribespeople believe the spirits residing in these objects can affect their lives. The Cua appease these spirits to remain on good terms with them, thus making daily life easier.

The Cua may also appeal to the spirits if they want something. Although it is not known which spirits are good and which are bad, the tribesmen consider it dangerous to deal directly with any of them. Since it is impossible to tell what a spirit's reaction might be, an intermediary—a sorcerer—is used. The sorcerer knows the rituals necessary for communication with the spirits; thus he knows when festivals and sacrifice days should take place. He presides over and manages all ceremonies and regulates their dates. The sorcerer also plays a principal role in those rituals marking the stages of an individual's life cycle. Some sorcerers are expected to foretell life, death, and future events and to calm the spirits in order to cure illnesses.[1]

Little is known about the religious practices of the Cua. Many ceremonies, including those pertaining to the life cycle, and especially the placating of spirits, involve the sacrifice of chickens, pigs, or buffaloes. The buffalo is the principal sacrificial animal and is usually slaughtered at the village sacrificial pole, with the entire community participating in the ceremony. Every ceremony is accompanied by dancing, wine drinking, eating, and invocations.

Missionary Contacts With the Cua

There are no reports to indicate that the Catholic Church ever tried to establish a mission in the Cua area or to convert the Cua. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, however, has several ethnic Vietnamese preachers working among the Cua.[2]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The basis of the Cua economy is agriculture, supplemented by gathering, raising domestic animals, hunting, and fishing. The village, rather than the family, is the important economic unit.[1] Although Cua villages are basically self-sustaining, there is considerable trade in cinnamon and tea. Rice is the principal crop and is cultivated both in permanent wet ricefields and by the shifting slash-and-burn method. A few settled Cua grow wet rice in the level areas in valleys; they have a rudimentary irrigation system which utilizes water from the seasonal rains.[2]

Most Cua, however, grow dry rice by the slash-and-burn method. Under this system, a field is farmed until the soil has become depleted. Then it is abandoned to regain its natural vegetation and nutrients. Its cultivators move to other fields, returning to the overgrown plots at a later time. A field may be cultivated for 3 or 4 successive years, depending on its fertility. These fields are not necessarily close to the village, some being as far as a full day's travel away. After exhausting all possible field sites in the vicinity of the village, the Cua move their settlement to another area where fresh land is available. Such moves probably occur every few decades.

New dry fields are chosen by the headman, together with the village elders and the sorcerer. In addition to inspection of the natural vegetation, certain divination rites are used to determine if the land will be fertile.

The preparation of a new field involves the felling of the trees and the cutting of dense forest floor vegetation early in the dry season or late in the wet season. The vegetation is dried in the sun before burning time, usually a month before the heavy rains begin. The field is burned with care to prevent the fire from spreading. After a field has cooled, the Cua clear the debris, leaving only boulders and stumps.

The layer of fine ash from the burned vegetation is washed into the soil by the rains and serves as a fertilizer. After the first rains loosen the soil, the planting begins. The men make holes for the seed rice with dibble sticks; the women follow, planting and covering the seeds. Except for some weeding during the growing season, the plot is left without further attention until the harvest, usually near the end of the rainy season.

The Cua also have small gardens in which they grow corn, cotton, and some tea.[3]

To supplement their diet, the Cua hunt and collect edible jungle products. Cua men are skillful hunters, using crossbows and traps. The game is either cooked and eaten immediately or smoked for future use. The women collect herbs and edible roots, shoots, leaves, and fruits in the jungle.

The Cua raise chickens, pigs, and buffaloes. These animals are seldom slaughtered strictly for food but are eaten when they are sacrificed during religious rituals.

Special Arts and Skills

The Cua are not particularly known for their craft work, but they do produce unusual pewter articles and beadwork.[4]

Basketmaking is practiced in every Cua village, but the articles produced are primarily for domestic use. Bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood are used for making various types of containers, house walls, mats, pipes, traps, and weapons.[5]

Cua women also weave coarse, colorful cloth of cotton, using a light weaving loom. The cotton fiber is grown locally, but the Cua have recently been obtaining thread through trade with the Vietnamese.[6]

Exchange System and Trade

Although they have long been acquainted with the monetary system of the Vietnamese, the Cua continue to depend upon barter for evaluating prices and for trade. The values of goods are still often fixed in terms of buffaloes, jars, gongs, and various other objects.

The Cua area is considered the source of the best cinnamon bark in the Republic of Vietnam; there is constant trade in this commodity between the tribespeople and the ethnic Vietnamese. It is common to see the Cua—men, women, and children—carrying enormous loads of cinnamon bark to the Vietnamese market town of Tra Bong.[7] Another product traded by the Cua in Tra Bong is green tea.[8]

Tin for the pewter made by the Cua comes from Laos on a regular basis,[9] but no further information was available concerning this particular trade channel.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The Cua have never achieved political unity on a tribal level. Allegiance is normally given only to the village, led by a village chief.

Each village, independent of its neighbors, has its own chief. The village chief is generally the richest (in rice paddies, buffaloes, jars, gongs, etc.), most influential, and most reputable man in the village. He is skilled in the arts of war and hunting and knows thoroughly the traditional customs of the village. Since a man's holdings, at least in ricefields, are normally proportionate to the size of his family, the chief often comes from the largest family in the village. The position of village chief is likewise usually hereditary.

In addition to the village chief, the elders of each extended family also serve certain political functions, although it is not clear how much importance their decisions have at the village level. Within the family, the elders are consulted on all questions; their authority stems from the family's respect for their age, wisdom, experience, and knowledge of tribal customs and laws.

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a *rapprochement* between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government supported a policy of permitting the tribes to be separate administrative entities. Now, however, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

Legal System

The Cua have no written language and thus no written traditional code of law. However, nearly all Cua behavior is strictly governed by unwritten tribal laws expressed in terms of taboos and sanctions. The failure of a Cua, or even of a stranger in some instances, to adhere to the traditional codes may result in severe punishment.

Authority to punish depends on the crime. An offense of no consequence outside the immediate family of the wrongdoer (for instance, a child striking his father) is settled within the family itself. If the culprit's actions have harmed the entire extended family, then the elders and headman of that family will determine what sanctions are to be applied. When an offense affects all the extended families of a village, the matter requires general consultation by the chief and elders of the separate families. In serious cases, the offender's entire family may be held responsible for his actions.[1]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[2]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[3] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[4]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[5] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[7]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[8]

Subversive Influences

Factors contributing to the vulnerability of the Cua to subversion are geographic location, historical isolation, and traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese. Effective Government presence and control in the Cua area was seriously eroded by Viet Cong activity during the early 1960's. According to one 1965 source, the Cua had been heavily infiltrated by the Communists at that time. The same source stated that an unknown number of Cua had received indoctrination and training in North Vietnam, and that these tribesmen had then assumed positions of importance throughout the Cua tribal area.[9] The Cua territory also reportedly served as a supply route and a refuge area for the Viet Cong.[10]

The principal objective of Viet Cong subversive activity among the Cua is to win the allegiance of the tribesmen and develop them into a hostile force against the Republic of Vietnam.

Still other important Viet Cong objectives are the maintenance of their supply lines through the Cua area, the prevention of movement of Central Government forces in the area, the destruction of any Government strongholds in the region, and the protection of the Viet Cong refuge area.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village, attempting to win the confidence of the whole village or its key individuals. The Viet Cong usually have a thorough knowledge of tribal customs and they are known to adopt Cua dress to identify themselves with the tribespeople.[11]

When suspicions of the villagers are allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong begin an intense propaganda campaign against the Central Government with the ultimate purpose of recruiting and training the Cua tribesmen for various support or combat missions.

Should propaganda and cajolery fail, the Viet Cong will resort to extortion and terror to coerce the Cua into refusing to cooperate with the Central Government. They may also intimidate the Cua into actively supporting the Viet Cong as laborers and sources of material.[12]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Cua area is by word of mouth. The Cua probably have no access to radios: any radios in the area have been brought in by outsiders for military use.

Short movies covering simple subjects and using the Cua language might be an effective means of getting messages to the tribespeople.

Written communications will have little effect on the Cua, since there is no written form of their language. Very few Cua tribesmen can read Vietnamese; however, these people could be expected to pass to the other tribesmen any information contained in materials written in Vietnamese. No information about success in the use of printed propaganda materials was available at this writing.

Information themes used among the Cua should stress the improvement of conditions for the villagers. If the tribesmen do not believe a particular program is explicitly for their benefit, they will not cooperate in making it a success. Possible themes for information programs are the control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against Viet Cong harassment.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Cua religious, social, and cultural traditions. Because of the Cua political structure, all initial contacts should be made only with the tribal elders. It is also essential to psychologically prepare the Cua to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village oriented and prefer to remain isolated in their traditional way of life, the Cua respond most favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reason for an innovation should be thoroughly explained; the Cua resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in planning and implementing projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness. Projects using familiar materials and products as much as possible are more easily accepted by the tribesmen than projects requiring the use of strange materials or devices.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Cua encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
    e. Insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    a. Provide basic literary training.
    b. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.
    c. Provide training designed to develop occupational skills.
    d. Provide basic citizenship training.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Cua are not particularly noted as warriors, although one source credits them with being aggressive in the field when they are well trained and well led.[1] The Cua do pride themselves on their skill as hunters; with intensive training, support, and leadership, they might become effective in jungle warfare. At present, the Cua are capable scouts, trackers, and guides.

When the psychological pressures or conversion to subversive activities fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. Frequently, the Cua yield and cooperate with the Viet Cong. The isolated Cua do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong and need Government training and support. Cua villages have no able organizations for defense except those equipped, trained, and organized by the Government.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

The Cua have traditionally used spears and crossbows with poisoned arrows. They are well acquainted with the use of traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks (used as foot-traps). Presumably, some of the Cua have been trained in the use of modern weapons by both the Government and the Viet Cong.[2]

Their relatively small stature limits the modern weapons the Cua can use; but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning Automatic Rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled and quickly reassembled. If a Cua can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Cua cannot handle sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, as proficiently as hand weapons. They find it difficult to understand the more abstract and technical aspects—such as timing trajectories—of such weapons.

Organization for Defense

Photographs show Cua villages have no outside defenses against surprise attack. However, houses and villages are usually built in relatively inaccessible and easily defensible locations. Formerly, the villages were surrounded by stockades, but these were replaced with fences during the French colonial period. As military action in Cua areas intensifies, perimeter defense may again be employed.

The Cua inclination to defend themselves is strongly influenced by their estimated probable success. If faced with an enemy with vast numerical and weapons superiority, the Cua will capitulate rather than fight.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Cua can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Cua learn techniques and procedures most readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations; such an approach is too abstract for them.

The Cua who have received some modern military training are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE CUA

Every action of the Cua tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Cua may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Cua are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Cua village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Cua. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Cua tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process, requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Tribal elders and the village chief should also receive credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.
7. The Cua fear leaving their villages at night except in large numbers. This is largely because of their great fear of tigers.

Social Relationships

1. The Cua should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a Cua house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Cua ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Cua house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Cua women.
8. When helping the Cua learn new techniques, methods, and concepts, be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible, identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Cua believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.
3. Do not mock Cua religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Cua life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Cua property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Cua language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Cua are becoming aware of the benefits of medicine and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Cua areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), p. 13.
2. Laura Irene Smith, *Victory in Viet Nam* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), p. 41; E. H. Adkins, *A Study of Montagnard Names in Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, February 1962), p. 6.
3. Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), pp. 1–4.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
5. Georges Condominas, "Aspects of a Minority Problem in Indo-China," *Pacific Affairs*, XXIV (March 1951), p. 79.
6. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–44.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
4. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 109–31.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–14.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–18.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–24; Norman Lewis, *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo China* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), p. 113

9. U.S. Department of Defense, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense, *Republic of Viet Nam: Nutritional Survey, October-December 1959* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1960), pp. 100, 104.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–13.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
12. Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), p. 403.
13. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–43.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Coedès, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–42.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
7. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), p. 1151.

VI. RELIGION

1. Kopf, *op. cit.*
2. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 43.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 42; Kopf, *op. cit.*

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Kopf, *op. cit.*
2. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
3. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
4. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

8. *Ibid.*
9. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965), pp. 61–63.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
11. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
12. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.

X. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

XI. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XII. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.

XIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE CUA

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adkins, E. H. *A Study of Montagnard Names in Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, February 1962.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Condominas, Georges. "Aspects of a Minority Problem in Indo-China," *Pacific Affairs,* XXIV (March 1951), 77–82.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. "Comments on Y Bham's Address — 15 March 1965." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, March 24, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. "The 'Slash-and-Burn' (*Ray*) Agricultural System of the Mountain Populations of Central Vietnam," *Proceedings of the Ninth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association,* VII. Bangkok: Secretariat, Ninth Pacific Science Congress, Department of Science, 1959, 56–59.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Lewis, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

"Malaria in Viet-Nam," *Time* (August 20, 1965), 43.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), 13.

Smith, Laura Irene. *Victory in Viet Nam.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.

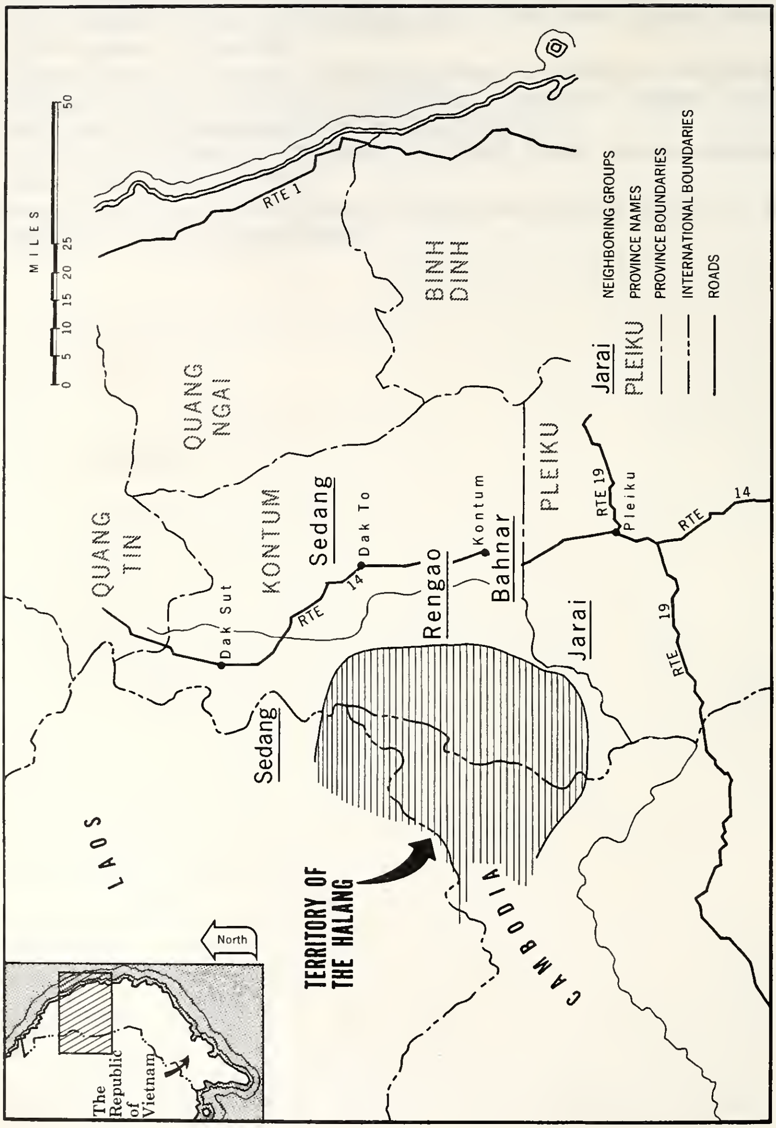
Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of Defense, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense. *Republic of Viet Nam: Nutritional Survey, October-December 1959.* Washington, D.C.: G.P.O, July 1960.

U.S. Information Service. *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands.* Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964.


MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
RTE 1
BINH DINH
QUANG NGAI
QUANG TIN
KONTUM
Sedang
Dak To
Dak Sut
RTE 14
Rengao
Kontum
Bahnar
PLEIKU
RTE 19
Pleiku
RTE 14
Jarai
RTE 19
Sedang
LAOS
TERRITORY OF THE HALANG
CAMBODIA
North
The Republic of Vietnam
Jarai NEIGHBORING GROUPS
PLEIKU PROVINCE NAMES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
ROADS

The Halang.

CHAPTER 4. THE HALANG

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Halang inhabit the rough, mountainous terrain near the intersection of the borders of Laos, Cambodia, and the Republic of Vietnam. It is estimated that the Halang population in all three countries exceeds 40,000. Of Mon-Khmer ethnic origin, the Halang speak a language closely related to that of their northeastern neighbors, the Sedang.

Halang society is patriarchal and the autonomous village constitutes the highest level of political organization. Their agrarian economy depends on slash-and-burn agriculture for the primary crop of rice and the secondary crop of corn.

Believing in a host of animistic spirits, the Halang spend their lives appeasing evil spirits, yet they consider the veneration of good spirits unnecessary.

Name and Size of Group

The Halang, also known as the Selang, are called Saleng by the Laotians.[1] The word *halang* reportedly means "mixed blood."[2] The only reported subgroup of the Halang are the Halang-Doan, most of whom live in Laos. However, the classification of the Halang-Doan is confusing, for they are sometimes treated as a separate group, or even as a subgroup of the Sedang.[3]

The exact number of Halang is unknown. In 1962 it was estimated there were 30,000 Halang in the Republic of Vietnam, 10,000 in Laos, and "some" in Cambodia.[4] During the past 10 years the Halang have evidently been moving continually westward into Laos and Cambodia, so that only a minority may now reside in the Republic of Vietnam.[5]

Location and Terrain Analysis

In the Republic of Vietnam, the Halang live in the western and southwestern portions of Kontum Province, contiguous to the Laotian and Cambodian borders. The Dak Hodrai, a tributary of the Se San River, traverses this region from north to south. There are no major roads in this area. On the north and northeast the Halang are surrounded by the Sedang; on the east, by the Rengao;

and on the southeast and south, by the Jarai. The Bahnar are located a bit further south and east, around the city of Kontum.

The Halang area consists of heavily forested rolling hills and steep mountains cut by many narrow river valleys. The paucity of roads, trails, and navigable waterways precludes passage through the region, especially during the rainy season from April to mid-September.

The summer monsoon (April–mid-September) and the winter monsoon (mid-September–March) provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer, these winds come mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast.

Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the monsoon-borne rain. Precipitation is high—averaging more than 80 inches in the lower elevation and more than 150 inches in the higher areas. Normally the weather is warm and humid, with frequent cloudiness.

The high and relatively evenly distributed precipitation gives this area rain forest vegetation of two distinct belts. At the higher elevations is the primary rain forest, where the trees, with an average height of 75 to 90 feet, form a continuous canopy. Below this canopy are smaller trees of 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this type of forest and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, this forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.

The second belt or secondary rain forest, which develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated, is more extensive in this area. In this forest the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.

The Dak Hodrai, the principal river of the region, flows in a north-south direction through the center of the Halang territory. Farther to the west, in Cambodia and Laos, the Halang area gradually becomes a plateau near the Se Kong River. The rugged terrain of the Halang territory and the large forested areas are unfavorable for helicopter and other air operations.[6]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: The Malayo-Polynesian and the Mon-Khmer. In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Halang belong to the Mon-Khmer grouping. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the Upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated through Indochina,[1] which has been a migratory corridor from time immemorial, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago.

Language

The Halang language, reportedly quite similar to that of the neighboring Sedang,[2] belong to the Bahnaric subgroup of the Mon-Khmer language family. The Halang language is composed primarily of monosyllabic words, like most other Mon-Khmer languages, although some polysyllabic words probably exist.[3]

The Halang have no written language, and there is no information that missionaries or others are currently designing a written language for them.

The similarity of their languages enables the Halang and Sedang tribes to communicate with each other. The Halang probably understand the languages of adjacent tribes such as the Jeh and Rengao;[4] moreover, some Halang may also have a limited knowledge of Vietnamese or French.

Legendary History

A Halang legend relates that long ago the country in the vicinity of Vientiane in Laos was invaded by giants 14 feet tall. Fleeing from the giants, a powerful magician, *pha-sai*, with his wife and children, journeyed down the Mekong River. Although his wife and children were drowned in a waterfall, the magician miraculously escaped. He continued down the Mekong River and up the Se San River, where he was captured by the tribespeople who lived on the riverbanks.

These tribespeople, united in a single nation and a composite of many tribes (including the Halang), treated the magician as a slave. One day, to show his power, he transformed all the tribeschildren into fruit; a little later he transformed the fruit into children again. Frightened by the supernatural power of their slave, the tribespeople decided to get rid of him.

Fortunately, the wealthy chief of a neighboring village, blessed by the spirits, bought the magician for an exorbitant price. The magician immediately proved his worth by turning water into a solid so that it could be sliced. So impressed was the chief that he freed the magician and gave him his four daughters in marriage. Eventually, the magician became the supreme chief; he established, for all the tribesmen in the area, a common language, residence, and occupation—searching for gold.[5]

There are no known legends concerning the subsequent separation and history of the Halang tribe.

Factual History

The paucity of available information makes it impossible to present a comprehensive history of the Halang as a separate tribe.

It is known that early in the 18th century the Siamese, or Thai, advanced eastward along the Se San River to the heart of the Halang area. Once military outposts were established there, the Siamese levied taxes and appointed officials to administer the area. From 1827 on, this Siamese influence reportedly led to anarchy and disintegration among the various mountain tribes. During this period, the warlike Jarai attacked the Halang.[6]

In the mid-19th century, French Catholic missionaries came into the Halang area and established a mission in Kontum.

By 1887, from their outposts in the high country to the west of the Annamite Plain, the Siamese threatened all the area which is now Vietnam. To resist the Siamese, the Catholic missionaries helped organize a confederation of the Bahnar and Rengao tribes. In 1893, French gunboats threatened the royal palace at Bangkok, forcing Siam to sign the Treaty of Bangkok. Thus, the Montagnard areas of Annam and Cambodia came under French control.[7]

Although many of these events occurred in Halang areas, there is no available specific information of Halang resistance to the Siamese or the role of the Halang in the tribal federation organized by the French.

Settlement Patterns

Halang villages are generally located in cleared areas on the slopes of mountains, as close as possible to clean water sources.[8] Individual Halang villages may be close to one another, giving the appearance of a single village.[9]

Like other mountain tribes who practice slash-and-burn cultivation, the Halang move their villages as the land becomes exhausted.

They also move their villages when a taboo is broken, placing an entire village under a ban, or when certain signs or omens indicate the presence of evil spirits that signify the village is no longer safe for habitation.

Reportedly the Halang have been gradually migrating westward into Cambodia and Laos for some time. Beginning prior to the Indochina War, this movement has been increasing because of Viet Cong military actions on the eastern boundaries of the Halang area.[10]

The typical Halang house is a solid comfortable structure built on pilings, with a raised floor approximately 4.5 feet above the ground. The walls on the sides of the house are of braided bamboo, about 4.5 feet in height; the roof is of rain-shedding straw. Entrance is gained through a covered porch-like platform, accessible by means of a notched wooden ladder.

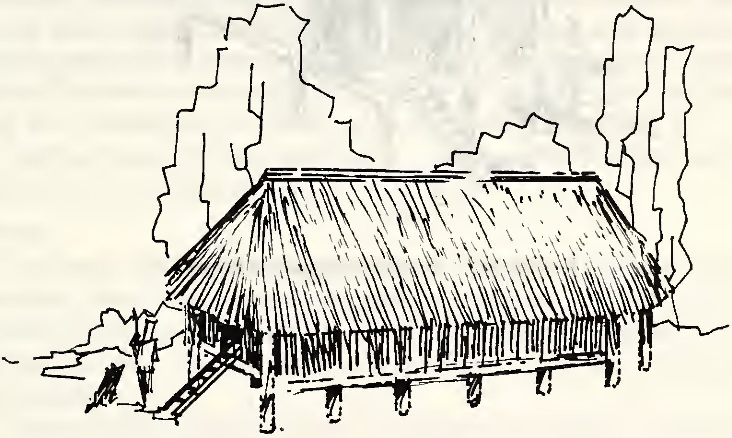


Figure 9. Halang-Doan house.

The central area of the house serves as a reception hall and as a site for family discussions and consultations around the traditional hearth. Separate cubicles, located on either side of the long reception hall, are living quarters for the individual nuclear families of the extended family of the longhouse.

Village communal houses are used for village meetings and as residences for widowers and unmarried men.[11] Resting on eight large columns, with walls approximately as high as those of the longhouses, the communal house is identified by the wind-resistant roof peaks 60 feet in height. Where several Halang villages adjoin, there may be as many as four communal houses.[12]

Although normally Halang longhouses are not arranged in any particular order around the communal house, among the Halang-Doan the houses are located around the communal house like the spokes of a wheel.[13]

In a cleared, square space in the forest near a Halang village is the tribal cemetery, where tombs are arranged in rows according to the status of the individuals.[14]

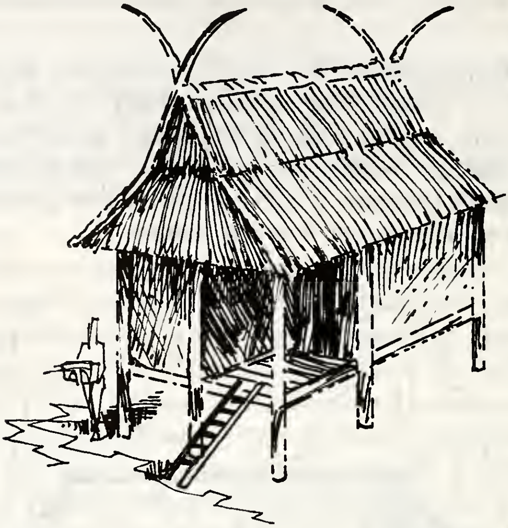


Figure 10. Halang communal house.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

In general, the Halang tribesmen are study, long-legged, short-waisted individuals with highly developed chests. Their smooth skin is bronze-colored; their hair, coarse and black, is pulled back from the forehead. Moon-faced, gentle-looking people, the average adult male is about 5 feet 4 inches tall. The Halang are a lithe, agile people able to climb trees like monkeys; but their diet does not provide strength for any prolonged muscular effort.[1]

An odd physical characteristic among Halang men is the noticeable separation between the big toe and the other toes. This oddity is the result of clutching the shaft of a knife with the large toe and the second toe while they crouch over their work.[2]

Unlike many of the neighboring tribes, the Halang apparently do not file their incisor teeth.[3]

Health

The health of the Halang who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene practices are rudimentary.

The principal disease among the Halang is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal area. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal. The other, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[4]

The three types of typhus found in the Halang area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[5]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the Halang area.[6]

Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and sexual hygiene.[7]

The Halang believe evil spirits cause sickness. If a villager has a fever, he makes an offering, *phak-chak,* to the evil spirits by placing bamboo stakes at the village entrance. The basket-shaped stakes, with openings at the top, contain the offering of bamboo tubes, the bottom of a gourd, and eggs pierced with a stick.[8] Buffaloes are also sacrificed to the evil spirit believed responsible for a serious illness.[9]

Psychological Characteristics

No specific information about the psychological characteristics of the Halang was available at this writing; however, certain characteristics common to other Montagnard tribes are given here to provide some yardsticks for personal observation. Halang villagers are probably reserved during their encounters with strangers. An outsider is generally trusted by tribespeople only when the most influential villagers have carefully evaluated his intentions and decided that he is friendly. Violation of a taboo, or any other action contrary to tribal customs and beliefs, may agitate the Halang or create hostility, especially if the Halang are stronger than the outsider.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Like other Mon-Khmer groups, Halang society is patriarchal, with the extended family the most important social unit and the village the highest social and political unit.

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Men, the dominant members of Halang society, are the decision makers. They also perform the heavier tasks of hunting, house construction, and clearing land. Only males can act as sorcerers, officiate at ceremonies, and hold positions of authority. Women, subject to the wishes of their husbands and fathers, perform such domestic tasks as cooking, caring for the children, and tending small garden plots. Halang children are treated permissively and with great affection. Children, according to their sex, will assist each of the parents in the lighter, routine daily tasks.[1]

Marriage

Until the head of the extended family gives his consent, parents do not approve the marriage of their children.[2] The two families negotiate for marriage arrangements through an intermediary.[3] Wives are not purchased, nor is a marriage dowry paid.[4]

Prior to the marriage, the girl's parents invite the groom's family and friends to share a jar of rice wine. When the family heads have drunk, the prospective groom offers his fiancee the wine jar and the part of a sacrificed chicken.[5] Later the marriage ceremony is held in the home of the groom's parents, who pay for the celebration. Gifts are also exchanged at the marriage celebration.[6] The wealth of the groom's family determines the amount of meat prepared for the marriage celebration. A poor family may have only chicken, while a rich family may kill some pigs, bulls, and even buffaloes for the feast. At any celebration, there is a large quantity of wine.

The marriage is considered official the night after the celebration, when the newly married couple move to the house of one of their families. After 2 years the couple move to the home of the other parents. Only when one parent dies will the couple occupy their own home.[7]

Birth and Childhood

The Halang near the Laotian border do not often practice abortion, although they are aware of the methods.[8] Nevertheless, the women bear few children, and the tribal population increases very slowly.[9]

Village matrons act as midwives. The birth is accomplished with the woman in a sitting position. Immediately after the child is born, a midwife blows into the child's ear and then names the child. Reportedly, wealthy Halang families celebrate a birth with a ritual feast.[10]

The ritual of naming a child is very important among the Halang. The name itself is regarded as the most important influence on the child's future. All children's names in a single family sound alike, at least to a Westerner. If one child dies, the names of those remaining children must be changed in order to avoid the same fate.[11]

Death and Burial

As a Halang nears death he is attended by an entourage, who force his jaws shut and close his eyes, for after death they will not be able to do so.

After death, close relatives chant to the deceased person while other Halang play "the music of the dead." The widower's elegy is—

> Oh, why have you left me?
> Why didn't you wait for me?
> Who will care for the children?
> Who will feed the pigs and the chickens?
>
> I shall be alone now to weed our field;
> Why have you left me?
> Why didn't you wait for me?[12]

Friends of the deceased bring mats of rushes and animals for the burial feast—each contributes in accordance with his wealth: chickens, a pig, or perhaps a buffalo. The feast includes rice wine.[13]

The deceased Halang is placed outside the house under a canopy, where the body rests for 2 days. However, the corpse of a wealthy Halang may remain under the canopy for as long as 8 days.[14] The body is placed in a casket made from a hollowed tree trunk, with the head on an earthen platter. Covered with mats of rushes, the body is placed on a plank frame for the trip to the cemetery.

The plank frame is placed on top of the grave. On the frame are placed the possessions of the deceased: his weapons, baskets, vases, and pipes. The frame is also covered with statuettes of buffaloes and funeral statuettes (called the *rum*) representing mourning people.

A horizontal roof of bamboo tiles supported on sculptured columns covers the burial mound itself. The columns at each corner represent human heads on which are mounted two elephant tusks.[15] Surrounding the grave is a row of stakes. Carved into each stake is the crude image of a human face.[16]

The Halang-Doan of Dac Rak village place their caskets on two sculptured columns. A second coverlet of wood, carved to look like the back of a buffalo, is placed on top of the casket. In addition, carved buffalo heads are placed in front of these caskets.[17]

Influential Halang families build roofed grave structures, like a miniature communal house. They surround the structure with carved wooden statues of crouching men with foreheads in their hands and elbows on their knees.

For nearly a year after death the Halang bring rice to the grave, which village dogs quickly eat. Moreover, monthly, when the new moon appears, the family of the deceased spends one night at the grave.

Each year the feast of the cemetery is celebrated by the entire Halang village. All villagers then go to the cemetery to sacrifice buffaloes and pigs and to drink many jars of alcohol.[18]

The Halang believe in an afterlife: those dying a natural death go to another world, to live a life similar to the one led on earth but without cares. Those dying a violent death remain on earth for a while before going to the other world. During this period, they wander about and haunt fellow tribesmen who have not purified themselves in a river immediately after the person's death.[19]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Halang activities are regulated by numerous customs and taboos. Prescribed methods and procedures govern everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Halang have passed down these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the Halang are constantly trying to avoid actions, activities, and contact with objects or animals that they believe might displease the spirits. Those tribesmen who have had contact with outsiders may not observe their customs and taboos as closely as tribesmen living in greater isolation from outside influences.

Dress

The Halang dress simply. The men normally wear a loincloth, a basic garment varying with the individual's wealth. A rich man's loincloth may be a strip of blue cotton with beaded fringes, brightened with red designs, and draped several times around the body. For a poor man the loincloth is probably barkcloth, a material made from fibrous bark pounded to a soft texture. Halang women wear a short wraparound skirt barely reaching the knees.[1]

Customs Relating to Houses

Formerly, human sacrifices inaugurated the construction of a new communal house, a ceremony climaxed by crushing the victim beneath the main pillar of the house. However, this sacrifice is no longer observed.[2]

Eating and Drinking Customs

Rice, supplemented by corn, is the basis of the Halang diet. Other items of the diet are edible fruits and plants gathered from nearby forests and fields, small game, wildfowl, and fish.

Domestic animals such as buffaloes, goats, pigs, and chickens are raised by the Halang. These creatures are used as food and for sacrificial offerings. Since the Halang tend to eat meat only during a ceremony, sacrifices are numerous.[3]

The Halang prize the wine from the sap of the coconut palm tree. When the stem bearing the unripened fruit is tapped, the fluid is collected in a bamboo tube containing the leaves and bark of a tree called *hian*. The resulting wine must be consumed within 2 days or it will become sour.[4]

Like other Montagnard tribes, the Halang devote a portion of their rice crop to wine. The villagers drink great quantities of rice wine which, like the valued palm wine, is an important element of many rituals.[5]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The animistic religion of the Halang, dominating virtually every aspect of their lives, is based on belief in a vast pantheon of spirits, both good and evil, who inhabit every object and creature of the environment. Especially powerful spirits are believed to dwell in old or large trees and in stones or roots of unusual shape and color. The problems of daily life are often attributed to the activites of the spirits.

Continually, the tribesmen attempt to appease and to placate evil spirits by offering sacrifices. The good spirits are not honored, for the Halang consider it unnecessary. For example, if a tribesman brings home an unusual rock and then has nightmares, he will immediately sacrifice at least a chicken to the spirit of the rock; on the other hand, if he has a good night's sleep, he will consider the rock a useless object and throw it away.[1] These religious beliefs are given ritualistic expression in both formal ceremonies and the routine acts of daily life.[2] For instance, since birds are considered intermediaries between man and the spirits, before undertaking almost any activity, a Halang will listen to the birds and postpone action if the songs are unfavorable omens.[3]

Religious Practitioners

Among the Halang are sorcerers who are responsible for the various religious ceremonies and who appear to have functions similar to those observed among other Montagnard tribes. For example, when a woman is suspected of hurling invisible arrows and causing illness or death, the sorcerer is called upon to test the truth of the accusation. Proof of guilt may be the bursting of an egg at the mention of the suspect's name. Or the sorcerer might direct both the accused and the accuser (or substitutes of their choosing) to plunge into the river; the person surfacing first is considered guilty.[4]

Religious Ceremonies

Little information was available at this writing concerning Halang religious ceremonies. It is known that the Halang celebrate two important agricultural feasts: one during the planting season and the other during the harvest. The Halang probably offer propitiatory sacrifies to the spirits during these ceremonies. Reportedly wealthy Halang families have a ritual feast to celebrate a birth within the family group.[5]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Halang have a subsistence economy based on slash-and-burn agriculture. Although rice and corn are the principal crops, the diet is supplemented by hunting, fishing, and gathering wild foodstuffs; some tobacco is also grown. No industry in the Western sense exists in Halang villages, but the villagers do weave baskets and pan gold. Baskets and gold are used in intertribal commerce and in trade with the Vietnamese and Laotians. The limited resources of the Halang undoubtedly restrict trading on a regular and profitable basis.

Predominant Occupations

Rice, the main crop, is cultivated by the slash-and-burn (*ray*) method. Briefly, this technique involves cutting down, during the winter months, all vegetation in the new area and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as fertilizer which permits crops for 3 to 4 years. When the fields no longer support a crop, the village moves to a new area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle; the tribesmen then repeat the slash-and-burn clearing process in the new area.

Tribal ritual determines the site of a new ricefield. First, the Halang offer sacrifices to spirits who they believe are locked in baskets. Then they move; once on the trail, they are attentive to birdcalls and songs. Only if the bird songs are interpreted as good omens will they continue their journey. If the songs contain bad omens, the Halang will return to the old village and begin again.[1]

Tentatively, the Halang select a new field, clear a small area, and set fire to it. Again, if the bird songs sound favorable, the land is considered suitable. If the crop should later fail, the Halang cultivating the field believe that they are responsible for angering the spirits by having neglected some traditional ritual.[2]

To protect cultivated fields from foraging animals (wild boar and deer), the Halang erect an enclosing palisade of strong bamboo studded with sharp bamboo spikes. In addition, small guard huts serving as watchtowers are constructed.[3]

Reportedly, panning gold is a primary Halang occupation. Large wooden trays filled with river mud are shaken until any gold present is left in the bottom. Minute quantities are panned; the average daily take of raw gold is worth only 10 cents, and is used, not to make jewelry, but for trade with the Laotians.[4]

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the Halang engage in ironworking; one source alleges that they do, while another major source specifically denies such activity.[5]

The Halang also weave baskets, make small clay pots, and produce a tough, crude sort of barkcloth by pounding a fibrous tree material until it is soft. As noted, the poorer Halang use this rough barkcloth for loincloths. Better quality cloth is obtained through trade contacts.[6]

Beeswax is another exchange commodity. The Halang collect the wax to trade for salt in Kontum.[7]

Exchange System

Ordinarily the Halang barter goods among themselves. Because their territory is contiguous to the Republic of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, the Halang are familiar with the currencies of all three countries, although they probably do not use these currencies for internal trade.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

Currently, the highest order of political organization in Halang society is the autonomous village under leadership of a headman and a council of elders. The basic political unit is the extended family led by a family headman. A village may consist of a single, large, extended family or a group of extended families, the extended family consisting of separate nuclear families (husband, wife, and children). Even though Halang legends allude to an overall tribal political organization in the past,* the Halang are not known, nor have they been known in recent history, to have any overall tribal organization.[1]

Each Halang village is independent and has its own headman and council of elders. Several villages may form loose alliances, but such organization is weak, for each village is free to negotiate or act separately at will. Although several villages may appear to be one large village with several communal houses, each village is a separate political unit and must be treated as such.[2]

The headman is generally the richest, most influential, and most reputable man in the village, yet he lacks absolute authority, being obeyed only when he has the support of the village elders. The headman is expected to be knowledgeable about tribal law and merits respect for his ability in war, hunting, and counsel.[3]

Wealthy and respected men, the village elders are almost without exception the heads of the extended families; as such, they must be consulted on all matters concerning members of their own family and the village as a whole.[4]

Specific information concerning the selection of the village chief —whether he is elected from the council of elders by the villagers or whether he inherits the position—is not available. Probably the process is a combination of factors in which the sons of former chiefs or of wealthy powerful families succeed to the position with the consent of the elders and the villagers.[5]

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapprochement between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government had supported a policy of permitting the Halang and other tribes to be separate administrative entities. Now, however, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

---

* See "Tribal Background," p. 127.

In 1965, very limited relations existed between the Vietnamese Government and the Halang, due largely to the heavy concentration of Viet Cong in the Halang area. Moreover, because of their proximity to the Laotian and Cambodian borders, the Halang have been migrating westward across the frontiers for several years.

Legal System

The Halang have no written language or written code of laws. Yet nearly all Halang behavior is strictly governed by unwritten tribal laws expressed as taboos, customs, and sanctions. Failure to adhere to the traditional code may result in severe punishment.

The gravity of the violation determines the authority to punish. An offense affecting only the culprit's immediate nuclear family is settled within the family itself. If the culprit's actions are deemed harmful to the entire extended family, then the family head will, with reference to the unwritten traditional code, determine the punishment. An offense affecting a whole village, such as the breaking of a major taboo, requires general consultation by the headman and the elders of the extended families; the offender's entire family perhaps being held responsible for his actions.

Punishments are economic in nature, rather than corporal, and require payment of fines with gongs, buffaloes, and other livestock or possessions. Usually a propitiating sacrifice to the spirits is also required. However, in the past, punishment included banishment from a village, trials by fire and water, and even death.[6] As late as 1913, culprits were sold into slavery in distant villages. Since the entire village imposed such punishments and never reported the offenses, the French colonial administration knew nothing of such cases.[7]

During the French occupation, the tribesmen were allowed to follow most of their traditional legal practices. On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences, but these decisions could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[8]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[9] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief; but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[10]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[11] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right of appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[12]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[13]

At the national level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[14]

Subversive Influences

The primary objective of the Viet Cong is to win allegiance of the Halang and to turn the tribesmen into an active, hostile force against the Republic of Vietnam.

Generally, the subversive elements infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals. Usually a slow process, this is achieved by providing community services and medical aid and by adopting tribal mores and customs.

Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the next phase is an intensive propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Then individuals are recruited, trained, and assigned to various Viet Cong support or combat units.[15]

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror, which usually results in passive resistance to the Government or active support for the Viet Cong.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Halang area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning Halang familiarity with or access to radios. Any radios in operation in the Halang area were probably brought in by military personnel.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Halang language might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

Written communication might have some effect on the Halang. Although most Halang are illiterate, some of the tribesmen can read Vietnamese. The literate tribesmen could be expected to communicate information in written materials to the rest of the tribespeople. Data about the successful use of printed materials are not available at this time. Information themes to be used among the Halang should be oriented around the principle of improving conditions in the tribal villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against harassment from the Viet Cong are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the Halang. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the tribal elders in order to show respect for the tribal political structure. The tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Most Halang tribesmen would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained; the Halang resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Halang tribespeople into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.[1]

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging, but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should ideally lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Halang encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    - a. Improvement of quality of livestock through introduction of better breeds.
    - b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    - c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    - d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
    - e. Insect and rodent control.
    - f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    - a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    - b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric-light systems.
    - c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    - d. Construction of radio broadcasting and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
    - a. Improve village sanitation.
    - b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
    - c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    - d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    - e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    - a. Provide basic literacy training.
    - b. Provide basic citizenship education.
    - c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Halang could possibly become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen could serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Halang could be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong.

Consideration should be given, however, to the Halang tendency to avoid the conflict between the Vietnamese Government and the Viet Cong. The westward migration of the Halang into Laos and Cambodia should also be examined before making plans for the military use of the tribesmen.

The Halang military experience appears to be limited to the traditional tribal raiding, involving weapons such as the crossbow, lance, and knife. There are no reports in the available literature that Halang tribesmen have received modern military training from the French, Vietnamese, or Americans.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HALANG

Every action of the Halang tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Halang may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require family consultation, divination, or a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Halang are listed below.

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Halang village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Halang. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Halang tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression that they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some credit for civic action projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Halang should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Halang ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Halang house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Halang women.
8. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not mock Halang religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Halang life.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Halang property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Halang language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Halang are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in

Halang areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.

2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and should have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Henri Maître, *Les Jungles moi* (Paris: Émile Larose, 1912), p. 414.
2. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964). p. 139.
3. *Ibid.*, Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 414.
4. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes" *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), p. 13.
5. Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]
6. H. C. Darby, (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 20–24.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 4; A. Baudenne, "Les Khas de la région d'Attopeu," *Revue Indochinoise* (January–June 1913), p. 442.
3. *Ibid.*
4. A. Lavallée, "Notes ethnographiques sur diverses tribus du sud-est de l'Indochine," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, I (1901), p. 299; Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
5. Henri Maître, *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909), pp. 34–35.
6. Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), pp. 54–63.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.
8. Kopf, *op. cit.*
9. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 423.
10. Kopf, *op. cit.*
11. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 423.
13. *Ibid.*, J. Hoffet, "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Géographie,* LIX (1933), p. 6.
14. Maître, *Les Jungles moi, op. cit.*, p. 225.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, pp. 420–22; Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), p. 404.

2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–13.
8. Maître, *Les Jungles moi*, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
9. Lavallée, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1084–89.
2. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 425.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 429.
4. *Ibid.; Lavallée, op. cit.*, p. 301.
5. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 429.
6. Lavallée, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
7. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 429.
8. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 413.
9. Paul P. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum* (Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952), pp. 233–34.
10. Lavallée, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
11. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 428.
12. Lavallée, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.;* Baudenne, *op. cit.*, pp. 429–30.
15. Lavallée, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
16. *Ibid.;* Maître, *Les Jungles moi*, *op. cit.*, p. 237.
17. Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
18. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, pp. 429–30.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 427.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, pp. 423–24.
2. Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
3. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 431.
4. Maître, *Les Jungles moi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 236–37.
5. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

VI. RELIGION

1. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 426.
2. Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
3. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 426.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 428.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 431; Lavallée, *op. cit.*, p. 301; Kopf, *op. cit.*

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, pp. 425–30.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 430.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 425.
4. Lavallée, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
5. *Ibid.;* Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 426.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 426.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 424; Maître, *Les Jungles moi, op. cit.*, pp. 34–35, 422–23.
2. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 424.
3. *Ibid.;* Kopf, *op. cit.*
4. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 425.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Kopf, *op. cit.*
7. Baudenne, *op. cit.*, p. 425.
8. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
9. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
10. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–23.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information, *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962* (Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962), p. 119.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

No footnotes.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HALANG

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baudenne, A. "Les Khas de la région d'Attopeu," *Revue Indochinoise* (January-June 1913), 260–74, 421–43.

Bitard, Pierre. "Notes sur le Mon et les dialectes Mon-Khmers," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXI (1956), 303–307.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Cabaton, Antoine. "Dix dialectes indochinois recueillis par Prosper Odend'hal," *Journal Asiatique,* 10th series, 5–6 (1905), 265–344.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Guilleminet, Paul P. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum.* Hanoi: l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

Hickey, Gerald C. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———.*Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Hoffet, J. "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Géographie,* LIX (1933), 1–43.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

Lavallée, A. "Notes ethnographiques sur diverses tribus du sud-est de l'Indochine," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* I (1901), 291–311.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

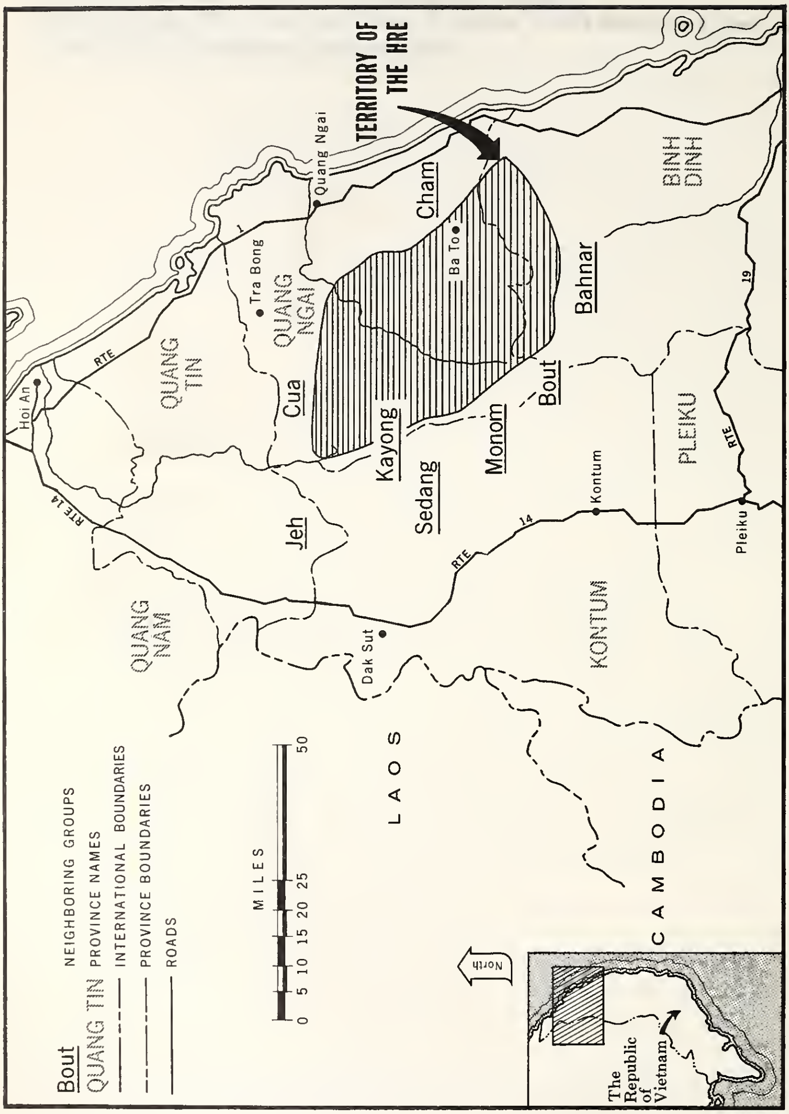
———. *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois*. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), 13.

Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information. *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962*. Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1963.


TERRITORY OF THE HRE
Bout NEIGHBORING GROUPS
QUANG TIN PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
North
The Republic of Vietnam
LAOS
CAMBODIA
QUANG NAM
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGAI
KONTUM
PLEIKU
BINH DINH
Hoi An
Tra Bong
Quang Ngai
Ba To
Dak Sut
Kontum
Pleiku
RTE 14
RTE
RTE 14
RTE
1
19
Cua
Jeh
Kayong
Sedang
Monom
Bout
Bahnar
Cham

The Hre

CHAPTER 5. THE HRE

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Hre are one of the largest Mon-Khmer-speaking Montagnard tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam. Estimated to number at least 27,000 and perhaps as many as 210,000 persons, the Hre live in both the river valleys and highlands of Quang Ngai Province. The highest order of political organization among the Hre is the village unit, although in the past they have combined into larger groups against Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) aggression. Shared language, customs, and traditions are the major factors uniting these autonomous villages into an identifiable tribal grouping.

Hre families are patriarchal, and kinship is reckoned along the male line. Their religion is animistic and involves belief in good and evil spirits which dwell in both persons and the natural environment. When traditional customs have been violated or ill luck strikes, animals are sacrificed to placate these spirits.

Many Hre are sedentary and practice irrigated wet-rice agriculture; the remainder are seminomadic and practice slash-and-burn agriculture.

Name and Size of Group

The name Hre is used to describe the large tribal group which inhabits the river valleys and mountainous areas to the west of Quang Ngai. Although the Hre use the term to mean only those members of the group who live along the Song Re or Hre River, the term Hre is used by outsiders as the generic name for the entire group. Hre subgroups are named after rivers in the tribal area: the Dvak, Kare (Kha-Re, Kre), Tava, and Ba Vach or Ba Voch.[1] Although these names are used by the tribesmen, the only division of the tribe commonly used by outsiders is that of highland and lowland groups. The highland Hre inhabit the isolated mountain areas and the upper reaches of the numerous rivers of the area while the lowland group inhabits the remaining areas of the Hre territory.

Although the exact population figures are not available, the Hre are one of the largest Montagnard groups: estimates vary from

27,000[2] to as high as 210,000,[3] with the most probable estimates ranging from 90,000[4] to 120,000.[5]

Location and Terrain Analysis

The Hre are concentrated in the river valleys of the eastern part of the Annam Cordillera in Quang Ngai and northern Binh Dinh Provinces. To the east, they overlook the lowland coastal delta regions; while to the west, the Hre live in sparse settlements in the mountains almost as far as the Massif du Ngoc Ang and the Plateau of Kontum.

The coastal lowlands to the east and northeast of the Hre are inhabited by ethnic Vietnamese. To the north are the Cua; to the west, the Sedang; and to the south, various Bahnar groups. These three tribal groups have languages, customs, and economic conditions which differ from the Hre, especially the lowland Hre.

The Hre area is a remnant of a series of eroded plateaus dominated by high isolated peaks, some as high as 5,400 feet. The area consists mainly of slate, shale, schist, and other friable rocks. The plateau rises quite sharply from the narrow coastal plain and has many river valleys, some broad and meandering. The rivers, however, are short and swift, with varying currents and depths—a consequence of rain-bearing monsoons and typhoons.

The summer monsoon (May–October) and the winter monsoon (November–January) provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer, these winds come mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast. The eastern portion of the region has the most rain from September to January, while in the western portion the rainy season occurs during the summer months. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the monsoon-borne rain. Precipitation is high—averaging more than 80 inches in the lower elevations and more than 160 inches in the higher areas. Normally the weather is warm and humid, with frequent cloudiness, especially from January to April, in the eastern foothills.

Temperatures vary by roughly 15 degrees between summer and winter. Actual surface temperatures average 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in winter (January) and above 80 degrees Fahrenheit in summer (July).

Typhoons, occurring between July and November, also influence the climate. Preceded by high winds and cool, dry weather, the typhoons bring heavy rainfall, sometimes lasting 24 hours, that often floods and uproots the forests. However, intensive typhoons rarely reach the western part of the Hre area.

The high and relatively evenly distributed precipitation gives this area rain forest vegetation of two distinct belts. At the higher elevations is the first belt, primary rain forest, where the trees of an average height of 75 to 90 feet form a continuous canopy. Below this canopy are smaller trees of 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this type of forest, and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, this forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.

The second belt, or secondary rain forest, which develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated, is more extensive in this area. In this forest the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.

The secondary rain forest is an especially unhealthy malaria area. Malaria, rather than the dense forest or the warlike tribes, has inhibited deeper Vietnamese penetration from the east. Despite proximity to one of the most densely populated Vietnamese areas, there has been little migration or settlement of the foothills and mountains of the Hre area—except for former military colonies.

Few roads exist in the Hre area. A main road extends from Mo Duc, on National Route 1, to Kontum through Ba To and Gia Vuc. Formerly a bumpy path, this road was paved in the middle 1950's. A narrow and tortuous road, this highway is not dependable, as the Viet Cong frequently damage it. Other roads or trails (which will accommodate jeeps) extend from Quang Ngai to Ba To and from Quang Ngai to Gia Vuc, along the Song Tra Khuc River.[6]

Trails are few, difficult to traverse, and are almost invisible from the air. Horses are used to transport goods; bicycles are a popular means of travel in the lowlands.[7]

Rivers are, for the most part, impassable. Even during high water, only very small boats and canoes can navigate the rivers. During low water seasons, the riverbed reveals many impeding rocks. Additional hazards to water transportation are typhoons and monsoons.[8]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: the Malayo-Polynesian and the Mon-Khmer. In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Hre belong to the Mon-Khmer grouping. Indochina has been a migratory corridor for centuries, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the Upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated through Indochina.[1] The Hre are descendants of these ancient Mon-Khmer migrants. Some investigators consider the Hre a subgroup of the Sedang, but most scholars regard the Hre as a separate ethnic group.[2]

Language

All Hre speak the same basic language, which may vary in accent and dialect from village to village. The Hre language is closely related to Bahnar (the principal trade language of the area) and is classified as a Mon-Khmer language.[3] The Hre of the Lien and To River areas are also said to speak Cham.[4]

Hre has been described as easy to learn. "R's" are stressed even more strongly than in the French language, and frequently the Hre sound like Europeans.[5] Their language is primarily monosyllabic, as are other Mon-Khmer languages, and contains many words derived from Vietnamese and Cham. This borrowing is less evident among the Hre who have little outside contact.

All Hre tradition is transmitted orally, as they have no written form for their language. Recently, a writing system was devised for missionary work, but the extent to which the Hre utilize this written form of their language was not reported.[6] Currently a thesaurus, a glossary of terms and materials comprising an introductory course in basic Hre, has been translated into the Vietnamese and English languages.

Many Hre, especially the lowland Hre, speak Vietnamese and Bahnar and some speak Cham.[7] At least one authority considers the Hre to be poor interpreters; nevertheless, Hre tribesmen have been used by U.S. personnel as interpreters.[8]

Legendary History

Hre legendary history begins with a creation story. Long, long ago, some people and animals were born. Then came a great fire, burning everything on earth—even the mountains. This was concurrent with, or followed by, a great flood which covered all the earth except for two mountains, the Goong Din, or East Mountain, and the Goong Dom, or West Mountain. On the Goong Din there remained 100 Vietnamese: the remnant of a people who lived in boats. On the Goong Dom only a woman and a dog remained, eventually mating. They had a son who, by mating with his mother, produced the Hre tribe. Their descendants multiplied and finally separated—one half going to live in the lower fields, the other half to live in the mountains. Thus the Hre explain the numerical superiority of the Vietnamese and the geographical location of the lowland and highland Hre.[9]

Factual History

Little is known of the early history of the Hre, but they have long inhabited the mountains and plateaus of Central Vietnam. At least as early as the 11th century, they came under the domination of the Kingdom of Champa and were involved in the constant wars between Champa, Cambodia, and Annam. Not until the reign of Le Thanh Ton of the Tran Dynasty of Annam (1471), when the Cham were decisively defeated by the Annamese, were the Hre free of Cham domination. The Annamese occupied Champa territory as far south as Cape Varella, which includes present-day Quang Ngai Province and surrounding areas.

In 1673 the Annamese empire was divided into two separate kingdoms: the north was ruled by the Trinh family and the south was ruled by the Nguyen family. Hre territory (administratively named Tran Man by the Annamese) fell under Nguyen rule.

Although the Annamese continually tried to administer and to assimilate Hre lands—at least those parts adjoining the coastal plains—other important internal struggles diverted their attention. An annual tribute was exacted, and an occasional expedition was sent into the tribal territory, but the Annamese did not really gain control over the Hre area until the beginning of the 19th century, when Gia Long ascended to the Annamese throne.[10] At this time, the pacification of the area was entrusted to the military, and the area was reorganized administratively. In 1819, the Annamese military built a defensive wall, the Son Phong wall, from Tra Bong through Song Ha and Binh Long, east of Ba To, and on up to Nuoc Giap. Adjacent to the wall were military forts to prevent local rebellions.[11] Young Hre were conscripted into the Annamese Army.[12] Repeated rebellions and terrible wars devastated Hre territory, particularly in the Ba To region.

In 1863, spurred by local rebellions, the administration tightened its control of the area. Additional forts, with thousands of Annamese regular troops and local Annamese levies, were established. Under harsh rule, the Hre area was relatively peaceful.

French pressure compelled the Court of Hue to abandon special control of this area in 1904. The area was then absorbed into several existing Annamese provinces. Previously, the French had established posts in An Lao (1900), Ba To (1901), and Tra My (1902). The Hre fought French control; however, their antiquated weapons allowed only local harassment.[13]

In 1945, the Japanese disarmed the French military and imprisoned all the French. The Viet Minh, taking advantage of this, occupied the larger towns of Quang Ngai Province. Pushing into the interior, they at first achieved the neutrality of the Hre, either by propaganda or by force. Then, establishing their administrative center in Ba To, the Viet Minh suppressed all resistance and set up active control and pacification of the valley country of the lowland Hre. By bribery, they gained support of some Hre chiefs.[14] The young Hre were conscripted; those opposing the Viet Minh were carried off for forced labor in the coastal salt marshes.[15] With the Hre men either in Viet Minh military units or imprisoned, ethnic Vietnamese settled alongside Hre settlements to take over and to farm Hre land.

In 1949, the surviving Hre chiefs called on the Hre in Viet Minh units to mutiny and desert with their arms and equipment. The country rose against the Viet Minh. At a prearranged signal, the Hre massacred all Vietnamese men, women, and children in the area. In all, some 5,000 settlers were mercilessly killed, thrown into the rivers, or burnt as offerings to the spirits of the earth and sky, while Vietnamese houses were looted and burned.[16]

Fearful of Viet Minh revenge, the Hre warriors surrendered to French outposts, requesting their armed aid. The Viet Minh quickly reacted and mounted reprisals. Taking advantage of the absence of the Hre warriors, a Viet Minh regiment reoccupied Hre territory, looting, massacring, and burning in revenge. Most Hre responded with guerrilla warfare. Other Hre joined the French-sponsored Doc Lap Hre (Hre Independent Movement). Nevertheless, not until the 1954 Geneva Agreement did the Viet Minh relinquish control of the Hre valley country.[17]

Settlement Patterns

The lowland Hre rarely migrate, as their eastern valleys have long been fertile and productive. The highland Hre, however, practice slash-and-burn agriculture and are migratory. Ordinarily they remain in the same location for 2 or 3 years before moving on to clear another plot of land. Within 5 to 10 years, depending upon how quickly a fallow field regains fertility, the tribesmen return once again to recultivate it. Originally the Hre may have lived in the adjacent coastal areas, probably being forced into the uplands by the Annamese conquest of Champa and its territory in the 15th century.

Although Hre abandon their villages in periods of epidemics, they usually return to them at a later date.[18]

Hre villages are generally built near streams or river water; when this is not available, they will be located near spring water. If neither a stream nor a spring is available, wells are dug.

To carry water from a stream to the village, a pipe of bamboo or areca palm trunk is laid. A terminal stone basin is constructed to receive the water in the village. Often measuring from 1.5 feet deep and 6 to 9 feet in diameter, the basin is used for bathing, laundering, and drinking. The Hre always keep the basin clean and free of all debris and animal remains.[19]

Lowland Hre villages are located on the side of a hill, overlooking the fields below. These villages, usually more densely populated, comprise from 10 to 20 houses, each containing from 5 to 15 members, depending on the wealth of the family. Reportedly, some wealthy families have as many as 30 members. Some Hre towns are said to have up to 200 members.[20] Houses are surrounded by gardens of areca palms; fruit trees, such as pamplemousse (grapefruit), orange, jackfruit (breadfruit); beans; manioc; and corn. The Hre do not build communal houses.[21]

In the highlands, Hre houses are more scattered and a village may consist of only two or three houses. Many rugged Hre areas are completely unpopulated. In the populated areas, many houses stand alone on the steep slopes of a ridge overlooking grassy fields; few have gardens. Isolated houses, usually accessible from only one path, are often protected by a double bamboo palisade with two sturdy bamboo gates.

Hre highland houses are built on pilings about 7 feet high. Normally occupied by an extended family, the house measures from 18 feet to 45 feet long. Houses as long as 100 feet have also been reported. A family's wealth is, in part, measured by the length of a house.[22] A heavily thatched bamboo and rattan-tied roof slopes down on two sides; walls and floors are constructed of braided bamboo; entry is by a bamboo ladder or a thick log into which steps have been cut.

Hre houses usually have two verandas—open, roofed porches—with stairways. Measuring 9 to 12 feet in length, the verandas connect with the interior of the house by a door of bamboo or thin wood strips. The front veranda or *ben chin* is a reception room to welcome guests, whereas the rear veranda or *ben gioang* serves as a family recreation area and as a workroom for the servants. The ben chin veranda serves as a parlor and is thus neater and larger than the ben gioang veranda. The Ca Ra subgroup of the Hre have a post, about 21 feet high, set in the middle of the veranda for wine drinking, while the other Hre tie their wine jug to a corner post of the ben chin. Guests normally sleep on the ben chin. Only when there is threat of danger from wild animals do guests sleep in the house.

Doors are usually of bamboo strips tied and bound with rattan, although some houses of the wealthy have handsomely carved wooden panel doors. Ordinarily, doors are adorned with chicken feet, fishtails, and feathers to ward off evil spirits.[23]

Hre houses vary in size and number of rooms depending upon the wealth of the family. Wealth and status are, in part, measured by the number of family members living under one roof. In houses owned by wealthy Hre tribesmen, each nuclear family (husband, wife and children) is provided with separate quarters. A second wife also requires her own room and fireplace, as do married children and servants.[24]

The room next to the ben chin veranda is considered sacred; here only the master and mistress of the house, with their small children, may sleep. This sacred room also contains the sacred mortar used for grinding rice. The fireplace in the sacred room is used only for cooking sacrificial food and may be touched only by the master of the house. Both mortar and fireplace are fixed in their places. Two cords hanging over the fireplace signify the family is temporarily absent. A broken mortar means the family has moved away.[25]

The number of fireplaces in a house is another index of the wealth of a family. A poor family may have only one or two hearths; a middle-class family, three or four; and a wealthy family may have several. Each fireplace pierces the floor, has four supporting posts, is square or rectangular, measures about 2 feet in width, has a wooden frame, and is used for cooking.[26]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Hre have been described as having lighter colored skin than neighboring tribesmen.[1] They are stocky and very muscular, with dark eyes and straight, long hair. In the past, the Hre practiced the custom of dental mutilation by filing the front teeth; today, however, only older members of the tribe have filed front teeth. Reportedly some Hre also scar their legs in time of mourning.[2] Nearly all Hre chew betel, which discolors the teeth.

Health

The health of the Hre who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene practices are rudimentary.

The principal disease among the Hre is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria found in the tribal area are benign tertian malaria, which causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal; and malignant tertian malaria, which is fatal to both infants and adults.[3]

The three types of typhus found in the Hre area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[4]

Also prevalent in the tribal area are cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations.[5] These diseases are spread by insects (including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse), by worms (including hookworms), and some are associated with poor sanitation and sexual hygiene.[6]

Nutritional diseases are widespread. A deficiency of thiamine, riboflavin, vitamin A and vitamin C has been reported; but intake of niacin, calcium, and iron appears to be satisfactory.[7] Severe periodontal diseases are common, resulting in loss of teeth or teeth becoming too loose for chewing.[8]

Hre water sources are usually superior to those of many Montagnard groups, for the Hre keep their water free of impurities.

The Hre associate illness with evil or angry spirits, and believe in treatment by numerous "cures" and sacrifices. For a minor illness, the sacrifice may be only one chicken; for more serious illnesses larger sacrifices are required. If an illness is not cured by the offering of a chicken, then a pig or a goat is sacrificed. Finally, when all else fails, a buffalo is sacrificed at a site outside the house, in the forest, or at the entrance to the village. If this fails to cure, the Hre resign themselves to inevitable death.[9] If a child has convulsions, a dog is killed and its blood offered in sacrifice.

Sorcerers, or *ba giau,* both local and itinerant, are the only persons allowed to offer sacrifices for illnesses, for they are believed to have the power to intercede with the spirits. To the sorcerers, the spirits give permission to administer medicine concocted from the various roots and leaves of the forest.[10]

When a Hre is sick, a member of his family cuts off the feet of a young chicken and places them in boiling water. The sorcerer then divines the cause of the illness; that is, he determines which spirit has been offended and what sacrifice must be offered.[11] The sorcerer may also set up a fragile altar (surmounted with frizzed pompons of bamboo) near the house and offer bits of rice and chicken to the spirits.[12]

The Hre believe that a certain type of stone will stop bleeding. This stone is first wet with water and then rubbed in the wound.[13]

Endurance

The Hre display considerable physical endurance; they can travel swiftly, even over mountainous terrain; they can lift heavier weights than can most members of other tribal groups.[14]

Psychological Characteristics

Although the Hre are not necessarily aggressive, they are fiercely independent and are accustomed to fighting for their tribal independence.

The Hre are hospitable and generous; they openly express their friendship, and among the tribespeople friendships are enduring and very close.[15] They apparently participate wholeheartedly in all events, whether drinking, singing, or dancing. The Hre realize wine may remove inhibitions, for they say, "When the wine goes in, the words come out."[16]

Except in the case of feuds, the Hre are apparently concerned only with the present.[17] This fact influences their conceptions of personal belongings and wealth: they have little conception of saving goods, and they establish value more in terms of use and status today than in terms of requirements in the future.

Hre women, especially the younger ones, reveal a preference for ornate jewelry and bright colors, a preference not shared by the men.[18]

The Hre do not easily forget injustices done to them and may show a strong hatred and desire for revenge. They are patient in seeking revenge, for they believe that only a foolish and angry man would fight against superior odds. If the wronged person dies before he is avenged, his children and grandchildren continue the feud. Feuds seldom occur in the lowland areas today, but they are apparently still frequent among the highland groups.[19]

Outside observers have reported that the Hre bear pain with considerable stoicism.[20]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Hre society centers around the village and family, rather than around the tribe or clan. The extended family is the common unit; a village usually comprises one or more extended families. A village chief and a council of elders provide leadership. Occasionally, a chief may usurp power and rule as a despot.

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

The Hre family is patriarchal; that is, the eldest male is the supreme head of the extended family. Reportedly this is given as the reason that a Hre never strikes his wife or children.[1] A married woman is the most respected female, while a widow is almost completely ignored.[2]

Hre adhere to a strict division of labor between the sexes. Women fetch water, fish, gather bamboo shoots and vegetables, transplant and thin ricefields, and grind rice. Men hunt, clear and plow ricefields, gather honey, and build the houses.[3]

Hre law and custom sanction polygamy. Customarily, a second wife is taken only if a first wife is barren; in that case, the consent of the first wife is not necessary. However, if the first wife is pregnant or is capable of childbearing, her consent is necessary.[4]

Marriage

Although women have an inferior status in Hre society, marriage customs are somewhat matriarchal. It is Hre custom, for example, that the groom's family pay for the wedding.[5] It is also customary for a newly married couple to stay with the wife's parents for the first few years of their marriage.

Ordinarily, Hre marriage customs are simple, with couples often marrying because of mutual attraction. During a preliminary courtship, the boy and girl learn each other's age and genealogy and become acquainted; then they inform their parents and ask for counsel. There is little fear that parents will oppose a marriage. The two families celebrate the marriage agreement with a drinking session, as they shuttle back and forth between the parents' houses. The host family offers the other family certain commemorative items, such as clothing and necklaces. The entire village is invited to the wedding, the accompanying sacrifice, and the drinking session.

Occasionally, young people do marry without the consent of their parents. In this case there is no ceremony or drinking party. Instead, the couple build their own house in the village and live alone.

To cement family friendship and cooperation, marriages are often arranged before children are born. When the children are grown, the marriage is consummated, even if there is a great discrepancy in age. Sometimes a partner in a prearranged marriage is a mature adult by the time the marriage partner is born and must wait for the child to grow up. Before the actual wedding, the consent of the couple is asked. If one person refuses, the pledge can be broken, but compensation must be paid by the family of the person responsible.[6]

A newly married couple usually stays with the wife's parents until 1 or 2 children are born and live. The young couple may then either establish their own home or, if the parents are wealthy, elect to reside permanently in the parents' house. However, if 3 or 4 children die in the home of the parents, the couple will move because several deaths would indicate that an evil spirit resides there.[7]

Divorce and Second Marriage

The Hre recognize divorce; the most common causes are inequality of age or lack of consent of the boy or girl in a prearranged marriage. When breach of promise occurs before the wedding, the party responsible must make restitution with one or two pigs and wine for the entire village. In instances of separation of a couple who have lived together, the indemnity is one or two buffaloes, depending on the family's position.[8]

Widowed spouses may remarry 1 year after the death of their spouse. All that is then necessary is the payment of a buffalo and approximately 3/10 of an acre of land to the village.[9] Remarriage for widows is difficult, though necessary; not only is a widow virtually ignored, but often she has no help for farming her ricefields. Only a poor young man or a servant is willing to wed a widow; this results in oddly matched couples with great age differences. If the second husband of an old widow is a young man, she may be compelled to find a second, younger wife for him, who then helps with the household and farm tasks.[10]

Adultery and Incest

To the Hre, adultery is a serious violation requiring village intervention to punish the guilty. The penalties for adultery are one buffalo or five copper pots, or a lesser fine of three copper pots paid to the offended party or to the village. If one adulterer is unmarried, the fine is only one pig.[11]

Incest is also a serious offense among the Hre. The Hre believe that incest will not only bring misfortune to the guilty party, but that the offense will also bring disaster to the village. Sacrifices imploring the pardon of the spirits are required to avoid such disaster. After the sacrificial ceremony, the property of the parents of the guilty pair is confiscated and divided among their relatives. The offenders must publicly apologize to the village; they must eat from a trough used by pigs; and then the despised pair are banished from the village. In former times, the penalty for incest was death.[12]

Pregnancy and Birth

Among the Hre pregnancy is considered honorable, while barrenness is likened to moral death.

Birth procedures vary according to location: there is one procedure for lowland women and another for the highland women. In the lowlands, a Hre woman has her baby in her house, assisted by a midwife who, according to ancient tradition, cuts the umbilical cord with a sacred knife. If the birth is difficult, the village sorcerer sacrifices a pig or a chicken. No medication is used during the delivery, although as soon as the baby is born, and for 3 days thereafter, the mother drinks a little water containing salt and a concoction made from forest plants.[13] The mother also abstains from eating meat for 15 days after the birth. Three days after the birth, the mother may bathe in clear water, and after 5 days she returns to her usual tasks.[14]

In the highland Hre areas, birth itself is considered a contamination and thus occurs in the forest away from the village and its inhabitants. The mother delivers by squatting on the ground. Several old women, acting as midwives, assist the mother and pick up the child when it emerges. The baby is immediately washed in water, and its umbilical cord is tied and poulticed with herbs. The afterbirth is buried secretly by the mother, who also wipes her body with leaves, grass, or old rags. Then the mother wraps the child in a piece of cloth and takes it to separate quarters in the house set aside for women with newborn children. The mother remains there for the month required for purification; her husband can visit but does not stay with her.[15]

Newborn infants are breast fed and are never given the milk of an animal. If the mother dies, the child is placed with a wet nurse. Should a wet nurse be unavailable, the infant is fed a powdered rice mixture. When the child is older, he is fed unground cooked rice.[16]

Usually a month after birth, on a fixed day, the father takes the child and presents it to the village. The sorcerer officiates at a special altar, on which are placed meat, rice, vegetables, wine, and tobacco in the hope that wandering spirits will be satisfied and will participate in the presentation celebration.[17]

Naming the Child

At birth a child is given a false name to mislead evil spirits; the Hre believe that a child uninitiated into special rites will, while sleeping, reveal his given name to evil spirits, who use this knowledge to harm the child. Parents reveal the real names to their children when a boy is approximately 8 years of age or when a girl shows signs of puberty.[18]

Family names are Vietnamese in origin, dating from the reign of Emperor Tu Doc in the late 19th century. To facilitate Vietnamese control, all young lowland Hre males were required to register. Since Hre family names are difficult to transcribe into Vietnamese, the Vietnamese wrote down only personal names, placing a group name in front of these. In the Nam Ngai area, before each personal name is the word *binh* or soldier; thereafter Binh became the family name of all Hre in that area. In the mountains of Binh Phu, the word *man* (pronounced "mong") was applied to those Hre.[19]

Death and Burial

The Hre announce death by sounding gongs. Relatives, friends, and even strangers will come to offer condolences, to weep, to feast, and to drink to the point of intoxication. The wealth of the deceased determines how elaborate the burial feast is. In a rich family, six or seven buffaloes may be sacrificed; a poor family may offer nothing more than a pig.[20] Poor families keep the corpse for a day and then bury it. Rich families sometimes keep the corpse for 3 or 4 days before burial. On the appointed day, the corpse is carried to the village cemetery, where a coffin has been placed next to the open grave. For the burial of a wealthy tribesman, the burial site is covered by a miniature thatched house. Poor families inter their dead, while wealthier families sometimes place their dead in elaborate, above-the-ground tombs. The coffin is a hollowed tree trunk of *loang lang* wood, a species resistant to decay. Personal artifacts of the deceased are placed over the body; then the coffin, sealed with beeswax and resin, is suspended over the grave.[21]

According to the Hre, the dead still own a share of all their family goods. Approximately a square meter of riceland is symbolically allotted to the deceased: this so-called ghost field may not be entered or cultivated. Once the deceased's property has been distributed among his family and the feasting over, the grave site is permanently abandoned.

In the highland areas, the consecutive deaths of three or four members of a family are interpreted as an omen from the spirits requiring a change of dwellings. If a village is cursed with five or more deaths within 1 month, the village itself will be abandoned. The lowland Hre, in such instances, however, do not abandon their homes; instead they offer sacrifices of buffaloes or pigs.[22]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Hre activities are governed by numerous customs and taboos. Prescribed methods and procedures govern everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Hre have passed down these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the Hre are constantly trying to avoid actions, activities, and contact with objects or animals that they believe might displease the spirits. Tribesmen in regular contact with outsiders may not observe their customs and taboos as closely as those living in greater isolation.

Dress

The dress of the male lowland Hre has been greatly influenced by outsiders, especially by the Cham with whom the Hre trade. The lowland Hre wear black shorts or trousers and a short black jacket. When they are out-of-doors, a few wealthy and influential men wear a skirt under the jacket. Most clothing is bought secondhand in the market towns or is obtained through trade with the Cham.[1]

Some of the highland Hre still wear a loincloth, while others wear the black shorts and a brief black jacket. A locally woven blanket may also be worn.

Hre men usually wear a turban; yellow is apparently the preferred color for the turbans. Like Hre clothing, the turban is derived from the headgear of the Cham.

Hre women, especially the younger ones, dress in very colorful clothing. In public, unmarried women wear a bodice or tight jacket which is usually blue and black, although some of the younger women wear white.[2] The jackets generally have two rows of red and white embroidery, 10 inches wide, on each side of a row of buttons down the front.

Skirts are black or dark blue and have two tiers; the outer tier extends to the middle of the calf, while the inner tier is ankle length. Both tiers have 5 to 7 rows of red and white embroidery, about 20 centimeters in width.

Jewelry is important to the Hre women, offering a convenient means for the display of wealth. The rich Hre wear heavy collars, necklaces beaded with wood, amber, and silver, or pendant necklaces of silver coins. Earrings of silver or gold may also be worn. The poor wear one or two strings of colored wooden beads, a small string of silver beads, or a necklace of red and yellow copper.[3] Some young women also wear silver or copper bracelets on their wrists and ankles.[4] Hre men wear a necklace, usually of heavy, dark beads; amber necklaces are considered proper for sorcerers only.[5]

Folk Beliefs

Hre folk beliefs center around ghosts, demons, and other spirits of unusual and mystical form. Relating folklore is a favorite Hre recreation at the fireside on chilly nights.[6]

Poison is the subject of much folklore. The Hre believe demons and other evil spirits live in poison. Accordingly, these spirits must be satisfied; the stories claim that in the past, once a year, on a moonlit night, a human was killed and offered to the spirits. In addition to the human sacrifice, the spirits were offered fresh blood from a white cock. If this annual ritual was not held, the Hre believed that the spirits would turn on any member of the household who possessed poison. The greater the number of sacrificial deaths by poison, the more contented the spirit was believed to become.[7] The Hre are also said to believe that children living in a house which stores poison are jaundiced, bloated, stunted, and weaker than other children.[8]

A typical story about spirits concerns a spirit-animal called *cha rap* which walks erect, is as tall as a man, has hair like a monkey, and has feet that are turned backwards. This spirit-animal lives in the deepest part of the forest or on the highest mountains, is rarely seen, and eats only young bamboo shoots. All children are warned to be cautious and to travel in groups when in the forest, lest they meet the cha rap, for the spirit-animal hides when it hears the voices of several people and will not harm them. To meet a cha rap means death, as it moves swiftly and cuts off people's heads with its knifelike arms.

Although the cha rap cannot speak, it understands human speech. If a human being encounters a cha rap and shouts, *"dam dam, dam"* (stab, stab, stab), the cha rap will be caught off guard and will attempt to stab him. This gives the human being a chance to escape; however, if he thoughtlessly shouts *"chem, chem"* (cut off head), the spirit-animal will kill him immediately.[9]

Another spirit-animal, called the *diam dia,* resembles a tiger. When it sees a man, the diam dia sits down, removes the skin from its chest, and eats it. A man who witnesses this horrible sight and says nothing is safe. But if the man says, "Heavens! What a terrible thing. It has taken off its skin and is eating it," the diam dia jumps up and immediately kills him.[10]

Some folktales explain Hre prohibitions against certain foods. According to one story, in ancient times a man caught an eel, took it home, and ate it. Disaster then struck his village, causing it to sink into the earth and disappear. Nowadays, whenever a Hre catches an eel he throws it back into the water to avoid similar punishment.[11]

Hre rationalization of modern technology is illustrated by their explanation of aircraft. When they first became acquainted with airplanes, the Hre believed that an airplane was a creature half man and half animal which ate no rice, but drank water (gasoline). The pilot was the father of the airplane and the only person the plane would obey. The airplane flew only when its father was on its back, it slept with the father on the ground, and crew members were the servants of the father.[12]

Eating and Drinking Customs

Hre eating habits are rather simple. They do not eat breakfast; their noon meal is at home, even if they are working in the ricefields; and supper is eaten at sunset. Food is usually served in baskets placed on the floor; wealthier families use copper trays, bowls, and chopsticks. The hand, however, is still the most common utensil.

Various eating proscriptions exist. A daughter-in-law and father-in-law may not eat from the same platter; the same prohibition applies to a son-in-law and his mother-in-law.[13]

Rice is the principal staple of the Hre diet. Only when the rice harvest is poor will they supplement their diet with yams, manioc, corn, or vegetables and bulbs from the forest. The Hre consider yams more nourishing than corn and prefer to search the forest for wild yams than to eat roasted or boiled domestic corn. The Hre also value a mixture of green jackfruit and rice above a mixture of rice and manioc.

Meat and fish are rare items in the daily diet; pork and chicken are eaten only on feast days and New Year's Day.

Crabs, snails, and crayfish are prepared by boiling, roasting, drying, and salting. When salted, fish are first washed, then placed unscaled in jars of brine, and covered with banana leaves. The jars are not tightly sealed, so the fish ferment with a strong, disagreeable odor. Frogs, another favorite Hre food, are prepared by cooking or salting. The whole frog, ungutted, is cooked in a pot with bamboo shoots. The frogs are placed in a jar, and salt is added; the frogs soon disintegrate into a viscious, rotten mass infested with maggots.[14]

The Hre do not cultivate vegetables. Rarely do the Hre eat green vegetables, such as mustard greens, lettuce, *ren* or bindweed (member of the morning glory family). More favored are gourds, bamboo, pumpkins, and a few herbs gathered from the forest.

Water, the common beverage of the Hre, is usually obtained from springs which are kept clean and pure. Stored in jars, the water supply is replenished by the women who carry it from the water sources in peeled bamboo tubes or earthenware jugs. Tea is expensive and is offered to guests only by the rich.[15]

Most Hre are betel addicts. A guest is offered betel even before food or drink.

Rice wine or *ca ro* plays an important part in Hre life. All Hre drink—men and women, old and young. The wine jug is passed around at all events, including festivals, sacrifices, family reunions, and when guests are being entertained.[16]

Wine is usually made from rice of the first harvest; if rice is scarce, then wine may be made with corn, manioc, green beans, or roots gathered from the forest. Almost half the paddy harvest is set aside for making wine, even when the crop is barely sufficient for the family's current needs. The rice is fermented for only 4 or 5 days and is never distilled; thus it has a low alcohol content.[17] Since rice wine improves with age, the wealthy Hre sometimes bury jugs of wine for a year.

To help the wine ferment, a local root called *ko xi blo,* which belongs to the *thao* genus of ground vine, is added. The Hre use only the outer layer of this root, which is scraped off, dried, ground, and mixed with a kind of ginger and rice powder to form a cake about the size of an egg. Half of this cake, together with a quarter of a bushel of rice and water, is placed in each jug, which is then covered with a layer of banana leaves. Making the fermenting cakes is considered degrading and only the poorest tribesmen make them for sale.[18]

The wine jug is tied to a post, usually on the entrance platform to the house, and is placed so that several guests may sit around it.

The wine is drunk through straws or *trieng*, narrow bamboo reeds usually measuring from 4 to 5 feet in length. The straws, which are long, pale brown, slightly curved tubes resembling brass, are made by drying bamboo reed and removing the pith.[19] To facilitate sipping, three or four holes are cut into the lower end of the tube. Drinking through a straw has the advantage of concealing how much a person consumes, provided he keeps the end of the tube in his mouth and pretends to drink.

Wine drinking is accompanied by a ritual. First, the host takes a stalk of dry thatch from the roof and dips it in the wine jar, symbolizing the consecration of the drinking tube to the spirits and the ancestors. Then he drops a few banana leaves into the jug so that the rice will not be disturbed or mixed with the wine. Next he adds enough fresh water to bring the wine level to the mouth of the jug. If the jar is not full, the guests are not considered to be honored. After lowering the required number of tubes into the wine until they reach bottom, the host formally invites his guest to drink with him. First he hands the drinking tube to the most honored guest. In so doing, he supports the tube with his left hand and keeps his right hand palm down. The guest takes the tube in his right hand, never the left, for the Hre believe the right hand to be more honorable than the left. Then the host sees that the correct end of the tube is in the jug. It is considered a discourtesy if the wrong end of a tube is handed to a Hre. To deliberately hand the wrong end to a guest is a provocation and a sign of contempt, which may lead to a fight.[20]

After everyone has been given a tube, the host and his wife place their index fingers on the mouth of the jar, saying seven times in turn, "May this wine bring you good health." The host and hostess then each take a sip through their tubes and through those of their guests. This wine they spit on the floor to show the guests that the wine has not been poisoned and that the straws are undamaged and unobstructed.[21] Then the guests also take a sip and also spit out their first mouthful of wine.

After this ritual, the drinking begins in earnest. Drinking is not continuous, and after every few rounds of drinking the tubes are put down while the participants rest and talk.

If the host sees a guest pretending to drink, he uses this ploy to oblige him to drink: he invites the guest to take his tube; at the same time the host pours a bowl of water into the jug. The guest must drink or the jar overflows. Then the other guests, one by one, invite the reluctant drinker to go through the same ritual. Thus the reluctant guest may be required to drink several bowls of rice wine. Custom also requires the host and other guests to join the nondrinker in the same formality.[22]

When the wine has been diluted by water, the tubes are moved to a spot in the jug where the water and wine have not yet mixed. Then another stage of drinking begins: the host sips a mouthful of wine from several straws at once, spits it into a bowl, and invites a particular guest to drink. Then the other guests invite that particular guest to drink also, and another round begins.

The host is pleased when his guests become intoxicated and display all the symptoms, including lying down on the floor. A drunken guest is considered a sincere friend who has highly honored the host. When a guest has reached the limit of his capacity and wishes to stop drinking, he may request the host's permission. The host may allow him to rest, but he will later urge that the drinking be continued.

Customs Relating to Poisons

Nearly everyone in the Hre territory possesses some poison, and its use is apparently common. Individuals poison their enemies and villages poison enemy villages. The preparation and use of poison is especially prevalent in the Ba To region. Usually poison is administered through the water supply, food, or drink. It is easy to poison wells, whereas it is impossible to poison springs.

Several types of poison are available, varying in degree of fatality and the availability of an antidote. The deadliest poison is powdered *do*, which is yellowish gray, has a nauseating odor, and is usually stored in a small bottle sealed with beeswax. The Bahnar Bonam prepare do from secret ingredients. Some Hre believe do is prepared from ground tiger whiskers and that a vindictive genie lives in the poison. A few grains of do, touching the lips, sprinkled in food, or put in a drinking tube, will kill a man. Death may occur in just 4 hours, or the victim can linger for as long as a week, suffering with stomach cramps, symptoms of cholera (vomiting, passing blood, and foaming at the mouth), finally turning blue and dying. Some Hre use this poison (do) to intimidate their neighbors.

In liquid form, do may be mixed with wine, food, and water; its effects are similar to those of the powder, except that it is slower acting, so that the victim may linger for as long as 10 days. Neither an antidote nor the composition of do—powder or liquid—is known.

A third kind of poison, *rin*, is used as theft insurance. Rin is a bulb which looks like saffron or ginger and is grown secretly by the Hre. Its leaves are picked and crumbled, then sprinkled on whatever is to be poisoned—including fruit trees—when the owners are absent. The poison will take hold when a person touches the object that has been covered with it. Various symptoms of this poison are eyes swollen shut and running with tears, a red and swollen face, swollen arms and legs, severe pains, yellow skin, or the loss of appetite. Furthermore, if the skin is scratched, a foul yellow fluid runs out; the urine becomes brown, and finally, blood is passed. The antidote for rin is a special leaf which when applied to the affected parts, effects a gradual cure.

Another poison, used on arrowheads for hunting and war, is fatal if it touches an open cut. When a poisoned arrowhead penetrates the body, it kills within 10 minutes. This poison is made by mixing over a flame a resin obtained from the *cam* tree (which resembles the persimmon tree) with red pepper, *rang ret* (centipede teeth), and *rang ran* (serpent teeth). The concoction is cooked until it becomes a shiny black ointment. To test the poison while it is cooking, a drop of poison is placed about an inch away from a fresh cut on a tribesman's hand; if the blood stops flowing, the poison is strong enough to kill man or beast. The arrowheads are dipped into the liquid poison, which is then allowed to dry. No antidote exists for this poison and it is always fatal. However, the flesh of animals killed by this poison is safe to eat.[23]

The Hre believe ivory chopsticks can detect poisoned food. If the chopsticks are placed in poisoned foods, the food will start to bubble like boiling water. Hence, a host may offer ivory chopsticks to a guest as a sign of sincerity.[24]

Customs Relating to Animals

The Hre regard the buffalo as the noblest of animals, hence the most important animal for sacrifices. The Hre consider the python the trickiest creature; the tiger, the most cunning; and the elephant, the most courageous. Ants are believed to be the remains of bodies which have rotted in the jungle and have not been given a ceremonial burial. The Hre have no taboos against the eating of animals—domestic or wild.[25]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Hre have had considerable contact with two lowland peoples—the Vietnamese and the Cham—for a much longer period than other Montagnard groups in the Republic of Vietnam. The Cham have always been highly regarded by the Hre, and a long history of friendly contacts exists between the two groups.

The Hre are not known to attack strangers without provocation. Their revolt against the Viet Minh in 1949, however, is evidence of their willingness to fight aggressively against those who threaten their homes and families.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The spiritual life of the Hre is very complicated despite an outward appearance of simplicity. The Hre believe that spirits, both good and evil, dwell in the objects of the physical world as well as in persons living and dead. The problems of daily life are often associated with these spirits, which must be appeased through offerings. Hre beliefs are expressed both in formal ceremonies and in the routine acts of daily life.

Certain trees, animals, and other natural objects are held in reverence, because the Hre believe the spirits in them can affect the lives of the tribesmen. The Hre worship these spirits in order to remain on good terms with them, thus making daily life easier.

The Hre also may appeal to these spirits to fulfill a wish or need. However, it is not known which of the spirits are good and which are bad, so it is considered dangerous to deal with them, and necessary to have an intermediary called the ba giau or sorcerer. The ba giau is a person who knows the necessary rituals and the times for festival and sacrifice days; he regulates festival dates and presides over and manages all ceremonies.

The ba giau is the principal in rituals marking the stages of an individual's life:[1] He is able to foretell life, death, and future events, to calm the spirits, to cure sickness, to interpret strange happenings (birds flying into a house, bees trying to build a hive in a house, a frog jumping on a roof, a rat gnawing on clothing, lightning striking a house or a tree in a yard, the meeting of a villager and a tiger, or a man bumping into another villager who is carrying a piece of charred firewood), which are considered evil omens, or *bo rinh,* and requires sacrifices.[2]

Usually in every locality there are one or two ba giau, who are treated with varying degrees of respect.

Principal Spirits

The Hre have several categories of spirits. The heavenly spirits are called *vya*; the earth spirits, *trau*; the spirits of ancestors, *bien.* Other important spirits are water spirits (*vya diak*), mountain spirits (*vya vang*), fire spirits (*vya un*), hearth spirits (*vya vna*), and evil spirits or demons called *kiet choc.*[3] The evil spirits are held responsible for drought and the death of people or cattle through sickness.[4]

Religious Ceremonies

When a sacrifice is believed necessary, the offended spirit must first be identified to determine the correct ceremonial sacrifice. The ba giau divines this by cutting off the feet of a young chicken and placing them in boiling water. He then "reads" the result by interpreting the contraction of the claws in order to determine the animal to be offered. Then the animal designated by the ba giau must be sacrificed—whether it be a chicken, pig, goat, or buffalo.

A principal sacrifice, one in which the entire community usually participates, is the buffalo festival or *ta reo po*.[5] The most noble of beasts, the buffalo, is thus the best possible sacrifice, for he may represent any spirit. The buffalo festival is held only for following special reasons:[6]

Recovery from a serious illness;
Narrow escape from death or accident;
The release of a Hre who had been arrested or captured;
A victory celebration;
Safe return from a hunting expedition;
Any agreement of friendship;
An annual village meeting at the village chief's house for an offering for the welfare of the entire community;
An offering every few years by a rich family to ask for the continued welfare of the family.

The importance of the buffalo sacrifice is demonstrated by the complex ceremony used in erecting the buffalo post. The ba giau selects the location, usually a spot in the forest or at the entrance to a village, and breaks the ground. The village elders then each turn over a symbolic spadeful of earth. The young men finish digging the hole—they are never allowed to take the initiative in setting up the post. Only an odd number of people—five, seven, or nine—may aid the ba giau in this task.

When a sacrifice is offered for petition or general thanksgiving (ta reo po or *cham gieng*), the buffalo post is a tall central column bracketed by two shorter columns. During a thanksgiving ceremony for recovery from a serious illness or during the rite of a blood pledge, the central post is surrounded by four smaller posts. The main shaft is constructed from bamboo and to it is affixed a wooden cross arm with painted red and black designs. The posts may be beautifully carved,[7] but the carving is done by lowland Vietnamese, not by the Hre themselves.[8]

The buffalo ceremony is always preceded by the sacrifice of other animals. At least one pig, or perhaps two or three pigs, are sacrificed at a crossroad. If these are not enough, then chickens and geese are also killed. These preliminary sacrifices are eaten before the Hre begin the buffalo sacrifice. Any uneaten portion of the sacrificed animals is left on the crossroad, to prevent demons from following the celebrants home.[9]

When preparations in the village are complete, the buffalo sacrifice begins. A buffalo is tied to the post, and the men and women of the village march around it to the music of gongs and drums.[10] The ba giau invokes the spirits and recounts his divination with the chicken's feet. When he is certain the spirits are witnessing the ceremony, he stabs the buffalo in the throat to draw blood. The elders then take turns making ceremonial stabs, until the young men finally administer the coup de grace. The sacred sacrificial knife, used only for this ceremony, is then returned to a sacred post in the house. Blood from the buffalo is daubed on the buffalo post and on bamboo chopsticks placed on a table in a symbolic invitation to the spirits to join the feast. Some blood is mixed with rice wine and poured over the sacred gongs. The foreleg, a hind leg, an eye, an ear, the tongue, horns, tail, and a bit of the buffalo's flesh are then cut from the buffalo and placed on a ceremonial table. When the carcass is cleaned, the entrails and a little more flesh are added to this offering; the rite is then considered complete. The remainder of the meat is roasted and all the Hre celebrate by eating the buffalo meat, drinking rice wine, singing, and dancing.

The sacrifices for thanksgiving for a recovery from illness[11] never end in a feast.

Other sacrifices are made at sowing and harvesting time. In every ricefield there is a sacred plot 3 meters square, generally located at the point where water flows into the field. Anyone allowing livestock to graze on the sacred plot is liable to punishment.[12] Here, before planting, a pig is sacrificed with some grains of rice from the previous harvest of the sacred plot. The seeds are then sown; only after these seeds have sprouted is ordinary rice sown. Prior to the harvesting, another sacrifice is offered on the sacred plot, then sacred rice is harvested—after which the ordinary rice is harvested. Following the harvest, a sacrifice is made in thanksgiving.

When incest is committed, a sacrifice is offered to placate the spirits. The Hre believe an incestuous union will bring misfortune not only upon the persons concerned, but upon the entire village. Rice wine and a white chicken or a goat are brought to the banks of a stream, where the ba giau offers them to the spirits. The male offender must stab the animal with a sharp stick, allowing its blood to flow into the stream and onto the ground. Then the village elders take the same stick and stab the animal while they ask the spirits to forgive the village, grant it peace, welfare, favorable rains and winds, and a bountiful harvest.[13]

Every season, sacrifices are also offered to the water spirit (vya diak) at natural springs.[14]

At sacrifices the Hre burn betel or *ghinh gu* in beeswax candles: one candle is burned when a chicken is sacrificed, two candles for a pig, and seven to ten candles for the offering of a buffalo. At the buffalo post is a ceremonial table of woven bamboo about 120 inches square. The type of ceremony determines the number of tables. Besides the candles and sacrificial objects, a jar symbolic of the wind is also placed on the table.[15]

A variety of sacred objects are used for Hre ceremonies and rituals. The principal object is the sacred hearth or *mnu uan t'teo,* the dwelling place of the fire god and the hearth god. Every house has a special room which, in addition to the sacred hearth, contains other sacred and venerated objects. Only the master and mistress, with their small children, may sleep in the special room. The sacred hearth is used only for cooking food for sacrifices. The sacred hearthstone or *mo pan renh* rests on the hearth. Only the master of the home may touch the mo pan renh and then only for religious reasons. If touched by anyone other than the master, accidentally or deliberately, the sacrifice of a pig must be made lest the gods become angry and bring disease to the family.[16]

The hearth room also contains the sacred mortar. It is stationary, carved from a tree trunk, and used for grinding rice. In a corner behind the sacred hearth are the sacred pots used to cook food for festivals and to make cakes for the New Year sacrifice. These may not be used for any other purpose. To the right, in front of the hearth, is the sacred sacrificial post or *de reng-kia.* Midway up the post is a bamboo tray about 40 inches square, on which the sacrifices are placed for ordinary feasts. When a sacrifice is offered, a small reed with one end shredded is attached to the sacred post. In a corner near the sacred post are placed the sacred personal properties of the head of the house and his wife. When the household head or his wife dies, these things are buried with them for the use of their spirits.[17]

Every house also contains a sacred sack of salt which hangs over the hearth. In the house of the rich this sack may weigh 12 or 13 pounds; in the house of the poor it is about one-third this size. This salt is used only for festivals and is never mixed with ordinary salt. If the supply of everyday salt is exhausted, the family may buy, trade, or borrow more, but it will never use the sacred salt.

Missionary Contact

Although the Catholic Church has been in the Hre area for a long time, it has not been very successful in making conversions. In 1958 a mission station was established by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It, too, has had little success. Conditions of insecurity resulted in the closing of the mission and the loss of contact with the Hre during the early 1960's.[18]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Hre economy is based on agriculture, which supplies the bulk of their food supply. The Hre diet is supplemented by food gathering, hunting, fishing, and raising domestic animals. There is little handicraft work among the Hre. Although the village is the basic economic unit, cultivation by family units for profit and trade is common, especially in the lowland areas.

Predominant Occupations

The cultivation of rice, the primary occupation of the Hre, varies in method according to terrain: wet rice is cultivated in the lowland valleys and slash-and-burn dry-rice cultivation is prevalent in the higher regions.

The lowland Hre cultivate wet rice on permanent fields with the aid of primitive irrigation: natural gravity, basket scoops, and tripod scoops. The time for planting wet rice varies. Many Hre plant two rice crops annually: the more important seasonal *(mua)* crop is planted from August to September; the second and less important crop *(chiem)* is planted in March or April. Frequent typhoons in October and November preclude rice harvesting during this season and all crops must be planted to mature by late summer.[1]

The lowland Hre cultivate many varieties of wet rice; they show a keen appreciation for the particular qualities of rice suitable for particular soil, water, and climatic conditions. The various types of rice apparently supplement each other, and the variety tends to eliminate complete crop failure. The lowland Hre farm with plow and harrow, usually drawn by oxen or buffaloes; buffalo dung is used for fertilizer, a technique acquired from the Cham.[2]

When the proper wet-rice seedbed has been thoroughly prepared by plowing and harrowing, the Hre plant the seed. One or two months later the seedlings are transplanted to another plowed and prepared field.

From 3 to 6 months after it is transplanted, the rice is harvested. The grain is cut with a hand sickle and carried to the houses for threshing, usually by buffaloes treading over it. Some Hre thresh rice by storing it until the grains loosen and fall off the stems, so that by the time the rice is ready to cook, it is black. The rice is husked with a heavy wooden pestle in a mortar made from a tree trunk.[3]

The two major types of rice crop vary in importance in Hre culture. The mua, or seasonal crop, reserved for making sacrifices, rice wine, and rice cakes, is stored separately from the chiem, or second rice. These two kinds of rice are never mixed or cooked together. Chiem rice may be cooked and served as soon as it is harvested, whereas mua rice may not be cooked until every member of the family is present. Only one crop of each kind of rice is ever planted during one farming season. If, after transplanting, the seedlings are killed by drought or insects, the Hre will not plant another crop; they will wait until the next planting season.[4]

The highland Hre in the mountainous regions use the slash-and-burn method of rice cultivation. Under this type of cultivation, land is farmed until its native fertility declines after 3 or 4 successive years. Then it is abandoned to allow it to regain its vegetation and nutrients. The farmers move to other fields and later back to the abandoned land.

Briefly, the slash-and-burn technique involves cutting down, during the winter months, all vegetation in the new area and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as fertilizer which permits crops for 3 to 4 years. When the fields no longer support a crop, the villagers move to a new area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle, and repeat the slash-and-burn clearing process in the new area.

Both the lowland and highland Hre cultivate a variety of secondary crops: gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers, tomatoes, red peppers, cabbages, corn, beans, manioc, and cotton.[5] The highland Hre eat more manioc and corn than do the lowland tribesmen.

The Hre, particularly in the Ba To and other lowland areas, supplement their subsistence with cash crops of tobacco, ramie, hemp, and broomstraw. Large areca (coconut palm) plantations are located in the Ba Doc and Gia Vuc lowlands. At least one group of Hre depends not on rice but on cinnamon for its principal revenue.[6]

The Hre sell coconut while still green; the Vietnamese method of cutting the dried fruit is unknown to them.

Large quantities of tea are also grown to sell to the Vietnamese. Various tropical fruit trees are common.[7]

When not involved in cultivation, the Hre gather forest products and plants for food or for trade. The men gather mushrooms and honey, while the women gather bulbs, vegetables, bamboo shoots, and certain leaves. The forests have little of commercial value, except for the cinnamon trees of Tra Bong. Little wood in the Hre area is suitable for construction—the wood serves principally as firewood for the Hre.[8]

The Ba To area is especially noted for the purity of its clear, pale white honey, which is sold unadulterated and unprocessed and is prized for its natural sweetness. Cham tradesmen often buy the honey for as little as 30 to 50 piasters a jar and then sell it for 50 to 70 piasters a jar.[9]

The men hunt to provide both food and items for trade. Hartshorn (deer's antler) and tiger bone are sold to the Vietnamese who value them as aphrodisiacs. Women fish and catch crabs and snails to supplement the food supply. Pigs, buffaloes, and some goats are raised primarily for blood sacrifices, although occasionally these animals are slaughtered for food. Buffaloes, although for the most part destined for sacrifice, are also used for plowing. During epidemics, many buffaloes die, as the Hre are unfamiliar with the use of vaccine.[10]

Special Arts and Skills

The Hre have no industry and are not particularly skilled in craftwork. They are said to have no talent for carving.[11] In every village there is basketmaking. Using bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood, the Hre make receptacles, matting, light walls, traps, weapons, pipes, and containers for water, salt, and tobacco.

A special artisan group makes coffins by hollowing out tree trunks. With a light loom, the women weave coarse, colorful cloth of cotton and ramie. Locally grown cotton and ramie fiber provide most of the thread, although current trade is supplying more and more fiber from outside areas.

Exchange System and Trade

Although they have long been aware of a monetary system, the Hre depend on a barter system of trade. Bartering is a conscious preference: the Hre prefer to exchange goods, for to them bartering is more convenient and direct. Buying and selling are apparently too abstract for the Hre. Only when dealing with the Cham do they use currency—and then they do so reluctantly. Gold, silver, and gems are used exclusively for jewelry, never as currency. When the Hre must handle money, they use paper money, preferring new bills to old in the belief that the old bills will not last long. The Hre tend to spend newly acquired money quickly, and as they cannot distinguish between the denominations of paper currency, they often pay more than the actual value of their purchases.[12]

Among the Hre, prices are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, copper pots, jars, gongs, and other objects.[13] From the Cham the Hre acquire copper pots which become family heirlooms. Together with items such as gongs and jars, these copper pots are transmitted from parent to child, with subsequent generations accumulating this wealth. Only dire circumstances will compel a Hre to dispose of his family treasures. Antique jars *(xon ren)* may be valued as worth at least 20 buffaloes. Few of these ancient Chinese jars exist.[14] The most valuable jars are seldom kept in the house; to preserve them from possible fire or breakage they are buried. Although villagers know where the precious jars are buried, their great veneration protects the jars from theft.

Buffaloes are also valuable, but are regarded as a special type of property because they are destined primarily for sacrifice.[15]

Apparently, for the most part, the Hre trade by preference with the lowland Cham.[16] They say the Cham are "good" to them, helping them during famine, illness, or misfortune and providing food and a night's lodging when they come down to market. For these kindnesses the Hre sell their goods at low prices to the Cham. Athough they profit less from trade with the Cham, the Hre feel more confident about the trade.[17]

Vietnamese traders live in several of the largest Hre settlements, and itinerant Vietnamese traders occasionally enter Hre territory. The Hre also go into Vietnamese towns for trading. The Hre are said to have little sophistication in trading—a trait that has enriched many a tradesman.

The Hre purchase cotton cloth, silks, agricultural implements, iron for their weapons, gongs, pottery, jars, dried fish, dogs, pigs, and other domestic animals, and salt. In return they sell coconuts, paddy, hemp, broomstraw, tea, betel, tobacco, rattan, beeswax and honey, cinnamon bark, hartshorn, ivory, and various forest products.[18]

For the Hre, trading is an entertainment involving long deliberation. Each family usually conducts its own exchange. For large transactions or the sale of items not normally traded, the villagers ask for the opinion of the *ca ra,* generally the richest, most influential man in the village. The ca ra is expected to know the value of goods and to be helpful in buying and selling, often acting as a middleman between a Hre village and the outside world. The Hre honor and trust connections made by the ca ra.[19]

The Hre never make a contract of sale—even for a ricefield. When the parties have agreed on a price, they invite the village elders and villagers to drink wine and to witness the agreement. A settlement is made then and there.[20]

Wealth Distribution

Although few Hre are wealthy, economic classes do exist. Evidence of wealth includes size of annual rice crop, number of ricefields, number of buffaloes owned, and number of copper pots, gongs, and jars.

A very rich man with a household of 50 has been described as owning over 200 *mau ta* (3,600 square meters, or a little more than an acre), 300 to 400 antique pots, 30 to 40 sets of gongs, and a few hundred ordinary jars. A poor man may only own 1 to 2 *sao* (one-tenth of a mau ta) and one buffalo.[21]

Other criteria for judging wealth include the length of a house (more than 90 feet would indicate a very rich family), the number of fireplaces (several denote a rich house), and the kind of necklaces worn by the women (silver collars, necklaces, or chains, at least 20 inches in length), denote wealth.[22]

On New Year's Day, possessions are displayed. Then one can easily tell who is rich and who is poor.

Land tenancy is relatively uncommon among the Hre. Eighty percent of the Hre in the Ba To lowlands own their own fields.[23]

Servants and agricultural help are difficult to hire and only the wealthiest can afford them. The Hre do not like to work for hire nor do they usually find it necessary to work for wages: ordinarily, when help is needed, neighbors arrange for reciprocal aid. However, during the season for rice cultivation, this cooperation is often insufficient, and additional labor must be obtained by tribesmen owning large pieces of land. Wealthy families may also occasionally hire guards to protect their possessions.[24]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The Hre have never achieved political unity on a tribal level. Allegiance is normally given only to villages, each independent and led by a chief and a council of elders.[1] In periods of emergency, neighboring Hre villages may band together for political purposes under one chief. The lowland Hre reportedly united under the leadership of two chiefs named Dinh-Loye and Dinh-Diu during their 1949 rebellion against the Viet Minh.[2]

The village is the basic political unit among the Hre. The village political system consists of a village chief or ca ra and a council of elders. The council of elders functions as an advisory body to the ca ra and serves, with the ca ra, as a tribunal for resolving village disputes.

The ca ra is generally the richest, most influential man in the village. He is believed to have derived his skills in war, hunting, and discussion, and his knowledge of tribal customs, from the spirits.

A ba giau or sorcerer may often become a Hre village chief. Powerful in the religious sphere, reputedly able to foretell life, death, future events, and to cure sickness, a sorcerer can acquire the despotic power of a feudal potentate: pronouncement from his lips could be the death sentence for a man or for a village.[3]

Under the French colonial administration, a French-appointed functionary selected from the village acted as the liaison between the French and the tribesmen, in addition to the chief chosen by the villagers. He was responsible for the initiation of French tribal programs, tax collection, and the communication of French decrees to the villagers.

Following the departure of the French, the Diem regime attempted to politically and socially integrate the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam.[4] Officially, the Central Government handles relations between tribal villages; Government representatives deal with groups of seven or eight villages, while the villages themselves are represented by their village chiefs.

Legal System

The traditional legal system of the Hre has never been recorded.

Their oral tradition is interpreted by the council of elders, while justice is rendered by the ca ra and the council. There is no appeal from decision: only by leaving Hre territory can a verdict be nullified.

Hre customary law is predicated upon the idea that every man is free. If a man violates tradition, however, he must answer for it. If the offender is absent or if he has run away, his next of kin —wife, children, or relatives—are held responsible. Punishment for certain crimes may even involve lifelong slavery for the person against whom the crime was committed.[5]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[6]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal laws and customs.[7] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and provincial levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[8]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief, aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[9] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[10]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[11]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[12]

Subversive Influences

Factors contributing to the vulnerability of the Hre to subversion are geographic location, historical isolation, and traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese. The Hre territory was known to be heavily infiltrated by the Viet Cong in 1965. The lowland tribespeople were generally described as anti-Viet Cong. The highlanders were regarded as neutral.[13]

The principal objective of Viet Cong subversive activity among the Hre is to win the allegiance of the tribesmen and develop them into a hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Still other important Viet Cong objectives are the maintenance of their supply lines through the Hre area, the prevention of movement of Central Government forces in the area, and the destruction of any Government strongholds in the region.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village, attempting to win the confidence of the whole village or its key individuals. The Viet Cong usually have a thorough knowledge of tribal customs; they will adopt the Hre dress to identify themselves with the tribe.

When suspicions of the villagers are allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong begin an intensive propaganda campaign against the Central Government with the ultimate purpose of recruiting and training the tribesmen for various support or combat missions.

Should propaganda and cajolery fail, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror to coerce the Hre into refusing to cooperate with the Central Government.[14]

During the Indochina War, the Viet Minh spread stories that the French were liars, fools, and cowards, that the foreigners wished to enslave the Hre, to steal their wives and daughters, and that the French ravaged all lands, destroyed all crops, and paid lower prices to tribal people than to the Vietnamese in the lowlands.[15] It is probable that the Viet Cong have adopted similar themes in their psychological warfare operations against the Vietnamese Government.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Hre area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning the number of radios in the area or Hre familiarity with them. Radios have probably been brought in by military personnel, but the extent to which they are accessible to the tribesmen is unknown at this time. Any radios in operation in this area could pick up broadcasts from provincial radio stations.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Hre language might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

The Hre tribe does not have a written form of their language; the only written materials that might be effective would be in the Vietnamese language, which a few Hre tribesmen can read. Tribesmen reading Vietnamese material could be expected to communicate the information to the remainder of the tribesmen. Data about the use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Hre should be oriented around the principle of improving the condition of the villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against harassment from the Viet Cong are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the specific Hre village. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the village ca ra in order to show respect for Hre political structure. The Hre tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Most Hre villages would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained: the Hre resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Hre villages into new and larger villages, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the

Hre encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
   b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
   e. Introduction of insect and rodent control.
   f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
   d. Construction of radio broadcasting and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   a. Improve village sanitation.
   b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
   c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   a. Provide basic literary training.
   b. Provide rudimentary vocational training.
   c. Present information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.
   d. Provide basic citizenship education.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Hre can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. Like the Sedang, the Hre are rated among the best and most tenacious Montagnard fighters.[1] The tribesmen can serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Hre can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership they can be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat force.

When psychological pressures to win Hre support fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. Frequently, the Hre yield and cooperate with the Viet Cong; without Government training and support, they do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong. Hre villages with adequate training and support will defend themselves and will occasionally initiate aggressive action against the Viet Cong.

Organization for Defense

Lowland Hre villages are not organized for defense against surprise attack. In the highland areas, however, houses and villages are purposely built in easily defensible locations. In the past, highland Hre villages were surrounded by stockades, but these fortifications were gradually replaced with fences. More secure perimeter defenses may again be employed due to current military action in the Hre area.

Types of Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

The traditional Hre weapons are spears, swords, buffalo hide shields, and crossbows with poisoned arrows. The Hre have long used traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks or foot traps. Some Hre had military training with the French and the Viet Minh and know how to use modern weapons. Their relatively small stature limits the weapons the Hre can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning automatic rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled and quickly reassembled.

The Hre pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Hre can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Hre have more difficulty handling sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, than hand weapons. They find it difficult to absorb the more abstract and technical aspects—such as timing trajectories—of such weapons.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Hre can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Hre learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

Those Hre who have served with the French are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HRE

Every action of the Hre tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Hre may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesmen, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Hre are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Hre village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village ca ra who will then introduce him to other principal village figures. In some Hre villages the ca ra rules as a despot and should be treated as such by outsiders.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Hre. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Hre tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process, requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. The ca ra should receive some credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of persons respected by the tribespeople.

Social Relationships

1. The Hre should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. The Hre like to shake hands with new acquaintances.[1] Visitors are more readily accepted if they shake hands with everyone when they first enter a Hre village.
4. When leaving a Hre, the customary farewell is *khae le a-lem* (Goodbye, I am going).[2]
5. When addressing an older Hre tribesman, it is a sign of respect to call him *dooc* (old).[3]
6. Outsiders should not get involved with Hre women.
7. When entering an empty Hre house, if one sees two cords hanging over the sacred fireplace, plus a mortar, this means that the family is temporarily away. If the mortar has been broken, the family has moved away permanently.[4]
8. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
9. Certain rites are prescribed for wine drinking with the Hre. An outsider unfamiliar with these rites should watch and imitate other guests to avoid conduct that might offend the host.
10. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a Hre house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
11. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Hre ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
12. An outsider should never enter a Hre house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
13. In a Hre house, the room next to the front porch is sacred; no stranger may enter unless specifically invited.[5]
14. The side doors of a Hre house are used only by members of the family—never by outsiders.[6]
15. When entering a house, shoes should be removed and left in a corner near the entrance. A mat is used to sit on. Guests staying overnight usually sleep on the ben chin veranda.[7]
16. Green branches fastened on all doors of a Hre house signify that a woman is in confinement and that visitors, not allowed inside the house, must sit on the veranda. Only the immedi-

ate family is permitted in the house, and they must use only the side doors.[8]

17. The Hre consider the right hand to be more honorable than the left. Never hand anything to a tribesman with the left hand, as this is considered to be impolite.[9]
18. When helping the Hre learn new techniques, methods, and concepts, be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible, identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Hre believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.
3. Do not mock Hre religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Hre life.
4. The Hre attach special religious importance to their main hearth room. Outsiders should not touch anything in this room in order to avoid violating traditional taboos.[10]

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Hre property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Hre language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the Hre tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Hre are becoming aware of the benefits of medicine and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Hre areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965), p. 67.
2. *Ibid.;* Frank M. LeBar, *et al., Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 140.
3. Bui Dinh, "Customs and Habits of the Hre Tribes" (JPRS: R–2341–D–A translation of a Vietnamese language publication, *Phong-tuc-Tap-quan Nguoi Hre: Ba-to-quang-ngai)* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1956), p. 3.
4. Laura Irene Smith, *Victory in Viet Nam* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), p. 47.
5. U.S. Information Service, *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands* (Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962), p. 18.
6. Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]
7. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
8. Kopf, *op. cit.*

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. Gerald C. Hickey, *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964), p. 60.
3. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 4.
4. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
5. C. Trinquet, "Essai de vocabulaire française-moikare," *Revue Indo-chinoise* (July-December 1912), p. 309.
6. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XV (Summer 1962), p. 13.
7. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
8. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
9. H. I. Phillips, "Hre Creation Story" (unpublished research paper), pp. 1–3.
10. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

14. Rene Riesen, *Jungle Missions,* translated by James Oliver (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1957), pp. 22–23.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.,* p. 3.
19. *Ibid.,* p. 19.
20. *Ibid.,* p. 3.
21. H. Haquet, "Notice ethnique sur les Mois de la région de Quang-Ngai," *Revue Indochinoise* (July-December 1905), p. 1422.
22. Smith, *op. cit.,* p. 53; Bui Dinh, *op. cit.,* pp. 8, 15.
23. Smith, *op. cit.,* p. 53.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.,* p. 16.
26. *Ibid.*

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.,* p. 72.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 73.
3. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 110–14.
4. *Ibid.,* pp. 114–16.
5. *Ibid.,* pp. 116–24.
6. *Ibid.,* pp. 109–13.
7. U.S. Department of Defense, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense, *Republic of Viet Nam: Nutritional Survey, October-December 1959* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1960), p. 104.
8. *Ibid.,* pp. 112–13.
9. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.,* p. 28.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.,* p. 29.
12. *Smith, op. cit.,* p. 54.
13. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.,* p. 33.
14. *Ibid.,* p. 3.
15. *Ibid.,* p. 5.
16. *Ibid.,* p. 25.
17. *Ibid.,* pp. 10–11.
18. *Ibid.,* pp. 13–14.
19. *Ibid.,* pp. 10–11.
20. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.,* p. 38.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Riesen, *op. cit.,* p. 88.
2. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.,* p. 22.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 19.
4. Riesen, *op. cit.,* p. 52.
5. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.,* p. 26.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.,* p. 30.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 26.
10. *Ibid.,* pp. 22–23.
11. *Ibid.,* pp. 26–27.
12. *Ibid.*

13. Haquet, *op. cit.*, p. 1424.
14. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
15. Riesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–65.
16. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
17. Riesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–65.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
19. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
5. Riesen, *op. cit.* pp. 154–63.
6. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
12. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
13. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–22.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
25. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

VI. RELIGION

1. Kopf, *op. cit.*
2. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
4. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
5. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
7. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
8. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
10. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
11. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–32.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
18. Richard L. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
6. Haquet, *op. cit.*, p. 1423.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, pp. 4–5.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
18. Haquet, *op. cit.*, p. 1423.
19. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
24. *Ibid.*

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Haquet, *op. cit.*, p. 1419; Riesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–63.
2. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 154–63.
4. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
6. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
7. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
8. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
14. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.
15. Riesen, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–29.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES.

1. Riesen, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HRE.

1. Bui Dinh, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bitard, Pierre. "Notes sur le Mon et les dialectes mon-khmers," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXI (1956), 303–07.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'historie des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Bui Dinh. "Customs and Habits of the Hre Tribes." (JPRS: R–2341–D–A translation of a Vietnamese language publication, *Phong-tuc-Tap-quan Nguoi Hre: Ba-to-quang-ngai.)* Washington, D.C.; Joint Publications Research Service, 1956.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Francaise d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393--561.

Haquet, H. "Notice ethnique sur les Mois de la région de Quang-Ngai," *Revue Indochinoise* (July-December 1905), 1419–26.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

"How God Spoke: Struck by the Spirits," *Jungle Frontiers,* XIV (Winter 1961), 5.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. "The 'Slash-and-Burn' (*Ray*) Agricultural System of the Mountain Populations of Central Vietnam," *Proceedings of the Ninth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association,* VII. Bangkok: Secretariat, Ninth Pacific Science Congress, Department of Science, 1959, 56–59.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

"Malaria in Viet Nam," *Time* (August 20, 1965), 43.

Phillips, H. I. "Hre Creation Story" (unpublished research paper).

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XV (Summer 1962), 13.

Riesen, René. *Jungle Missions.* Translated by James Oliver. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1957.

Smith, Laura Irene. *Victory in Viet Nam.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

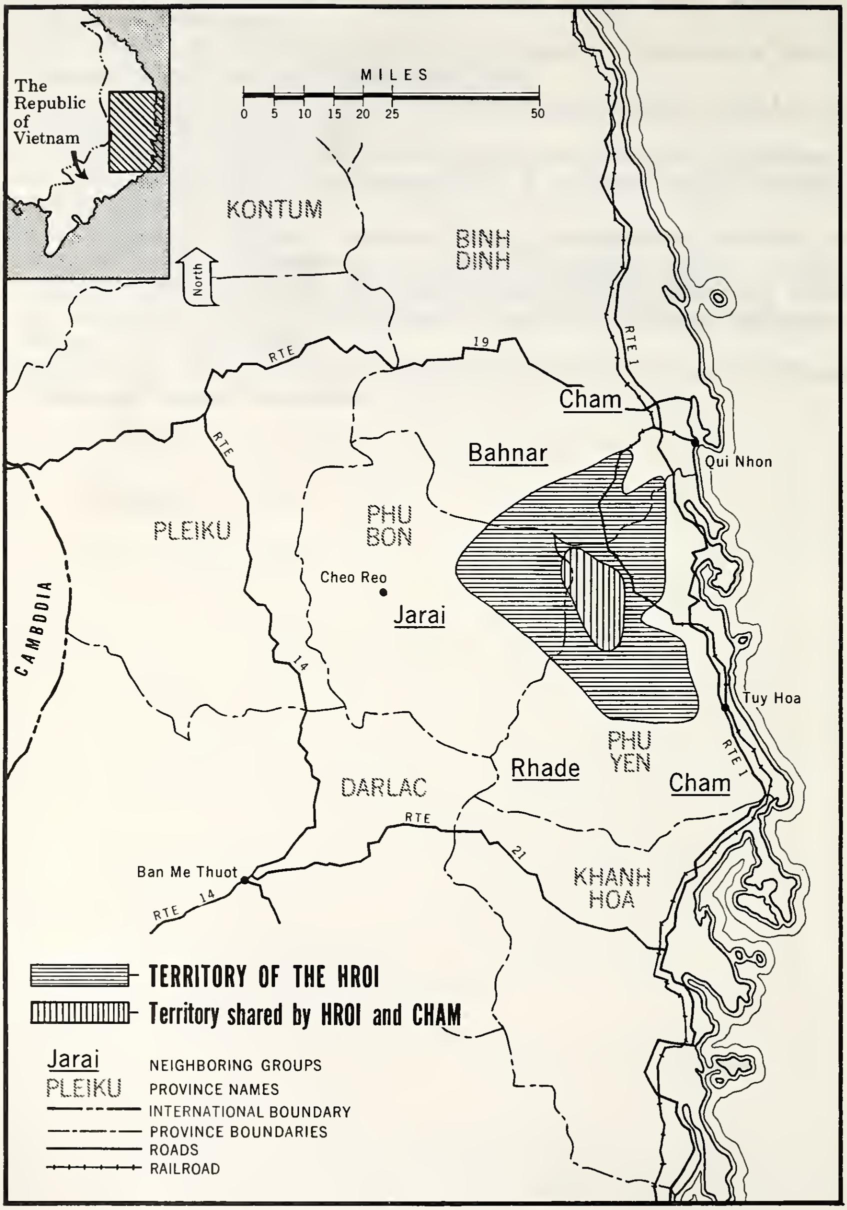
Trinquet, C. "Essai de vocabulaire français-moikare," *Révue Indochinoise* (July-December 1912), 309–427.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of Defense. Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense. *Republic of Viet Nam: Nutritional Survey, October-December 1959.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1960.

U.S. Information Service. *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands.* Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964.



The Republic of Vietnam
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
North
KONTUM
BINH DINH
RTE 19
Cham
Bahnar
Qui Nhon
RTE 1
RTE
PLEIKU
PHU BON
Cheo Reo
Jarai
CAMBODIA
14
Tuy Hoa
PHU YEN
Rhade
Cham
DARLAC
RTE 21
Ban Me Thuot
RTE 14
KHANH HOA
TERRITORY OF THE HROI
Territory shared by HROI and CHAM
Jarai NEIGHBORING GROUPS
PLEIKU PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
RAILROAD

The Hroi

CHAPTER 6. THE HROI

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Hroi are located in the inland mountains west of the coastal cities of Qui Nhon and Tuy Hoa in the central region of the Republic of Vietnam. Numbering between 5,000 and 10,000, the Hroi, usually classified as a Bahnar subgroup, comprise two groupings: one influenced by the Malayo-Polynesian Chams and the Rhade tribe, the other influenced by the Mon-Khmer culture of the Bahnar. The dialect of the former is related to the languages of the Rhade and Cham, and the dialect of the latter resembles those of other Bahnar subgroups.

The Hroi live in autonomous villages and, although they have a matrilineal kinship system, village political authority is held by a male village chief.

The Hroi economy is based on the cultivation of dry rice by the slash-and-burn technique. Their religion is animistic, involving beliefs in spirits inhabiting all their surroundings.

Name and Size of Group

The Hroi, sometimes called Hroy or Bahnar-Cham, are considered a subgroup of the eastern division of the Bahnar tribe. The Tuy Hoa-Qui Nhon railroad divides the Hroi territory into two areas. The eastern Hroi, who inhabit the area between the railroad and the coast, have close cultural ties to the Rhade and Cham; the western Hroi, located between the railroad and Cheo Reo, are more closely related to the other Bahnar subgroups. There are no reports of any specific subgroups among the Hroi.

The Hroi are a small Montagnard group. According to one source, they number about 10,000;[1] according to another source, 5,045; [2] and a third source estimates that there are 6,176 Hroi.[3]

Location and Terrain Analysis

The Hroi are located generally east of Cheo Reo and south of An Khe in an area bordered on the north by Route 19, on the east by the coastal plain, and on the south and west by the Song Ba River. At Tuy An, the coastal railroad curves inland and northwest, following the Song Cai River into the mountainous region where the Hroi live; it emerges from the Hroi area at Qui Nhon, a large coastal town.

The Hroi region is drained by many small rivers and streams. The terrain is rugged, with the mountains ranging in elevation from 1,500 to 3,000 feet.

Although many mountains in the Hroi area are covered with secondary forest growth, there may also be sections of the area that are essentially grassland, with few trees, while in isolated parts of the Hroi region, on higher peaks and ridges, is found the primary rain forest.

The secondary rain forest, the predominant type of forest in the Hroi area, develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left for a time uncultivated.

In this forest the trees are small and close together and there is an abundance of ground growth, woody climbing plants known as lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without constant use of the machete.

The primary rain forest, at higher elevations, has three levels. Very old and large trees, with an average height of from 75 to 90 feet, form a continous canopy. Below this canopy are smaller trees, varying from 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second level is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this type of forest and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, this forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.[4]

The climate in the Hroi area is influenced by two monsoon winds —one from the southwest in the summer (May to October), the other from the northeast in the winter (mid-September to March). Agriculture is greatly dependent on the rainfall (up to 150 inches) brought by the summer monsoon. Temperatures in the mountains are lower than those in the coastal regions.[5]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: the Mon-Khmer and the Malayo-Polynesian. Although the Hroi are usually classified as a subgroup of the Bahnar, a Mon-Khmer tribe, they appear to be related, by langauge and customs, to both the Mon-Khmer and the Malayo-Polynesian groupings. In terms of racial origin the Hroi apparently belong to the Mon-Khmer group, but their customs, and even language, have been greatly influenced by the Malayo-Polynesian Rhade and Cham.

The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated through Indochina.[1] Opinions vary about the geographic origin of the Malayo-Polynesian peoples in the Indochinese Peninsula. Some authorities believe that they migrated from the Indonesian area to Indochina. Others think they originated in the Indian subcontinent, migrated eastward, and then spread from the Indochinese Peninsula to Indonesia and the islands of the Pacific. Still others conjecture that the tribes migrated to Indochina from China proper. The latter theory holds that the Polynesians were originally settled in the Chinese coastal region of Kwangtung before sailing south and east.

Language

The Hroi speak two separate dialects: the Hroi in the northwestern portion of the area speak a dialect closely related to the various Eastern Bahnaric dialects, while the rest of the Hroi speak a dialect that shows strong Rhade and Cham influence.[2] The following list of words shows these similarities:[3]

English	*Eastern Bahnar*	*Hroi (northwest)*	*Hroi (south and east)*	*Rhade*
east	*sa*	*sa*	*bang*	*bang*
drinks	*ec*	*ec*	*mnhum*	*mnam*
bird	*sem*	*sem*	*chiem*	*chim*
house	*hnan*	*hnamo*	*sang*	*sang*
grandfather	*bok*	*bok*	*oi*	*ao*

During the last half of the 19th century, an alphabet for the Bahnar language was developed by Catholic missionaries, and recently they, along with Protestant missionaries, have taught Bahnar tribesmen to read and write Bahnar. Thus it is probable that some Hroi children have been educated with the Bahnar children. No specific information is available, however, concerning the literacy of the Hroi.

Legendary History

Legends about the origin of the tribe, the spirits, and the world are part of the larger oral tradition of the Hroi which, with tales of heroes, anecdotes about tribal members, proverbs, and tribal laws, are handed down from generation to generation. To preserve this entire oral tradition, the stories or laws are told or chanted, in verse form, around the family hearth in the evening or during religious ceremonies.[4]

The following is a legend of the origin of the Hroi[5] and of some of their customs.

Once upon a time, tigers could speak the human language and were the servants of man. The Emperor of Heaven saw that, despite his advice, men continued to kill one another. He then made the ocean waters rise and flood the surface of the earth.

In one family, there were a boy and his sister, and a tiger and tigress. When the waters rose, the two children got into a large drum with their furniture, and the tiger and tigress rapidly ran to the top of the mountain to escape the flood. The rising waters killed all the persons and animals that did not have time to escape.

Whirling waters dragged away the drum with the two children, and eventually it was caught in dense trees. A large fish tried to swallow the drum, but it was too big and stuck in the fish's throat. The two children still had their heads outside the mouth of the great fish.

When the flood subsided, the fish, because of its heavy prey, stayed in the narrow brook. Then the tiger and tigress came down from the mountaintop to search for food. At the brook they caught the fish. The girl spoke first:

"Oh, Mr. Tiger, do not eat the fish yet. Please save us first."

The tiger and tigress saw the children of their former masters. The tiger roared and said, "Oh, there are survivors among men. Let me kill them."

The tigress stopped her mate. "No, dear, this girl was very kind to us."

The tiger mumbled, "If we let them live, they will again become our masters."

Getting out of the drum the girl ran to them and said, "No, Mr. Tiger, we will never forget you if you let us live."

The tiger and tigress took pity on the beautiful girl. They said, "All right, we will let you live. But from now on you must behave kindly and nicely."

Just then, the boy got out of the drum, carrying his knife and crossbow. He then heard the tiger and tigress talking to his sister. Enraged, he said, "I will kill you!" The tiger and the tigress were frightened, but the girl said, "No, brother. The tiger just saved us. Why must we kill him?"

The boy answered, "I must kill these ungrateful animals. We raised the tigers since their childhood, yet he wants to kill us."

The tiger said, "Now, only you two and we are left. We must not kill one another. We will go to the jungles and help you. You two should marry each other and propagate your race." The tigress also said, "That is right. We will be on good terms forever."

The boy still wanted to kill the tiger and the tigress. The girl then took the knife and crossbow and broke them. "The tiger and tigress are right. We should not kill one another." Then, turning to the tiger, she continued, "Please stay with us. Do not go back to the jungle."

The tiger and tigress and the brother and sister returned to their village and rebuilt their houses. From that time on, men and tigers lived together until they again quarreled; then the tigers could no longer speak human language and went back to the jungles.

Following the advice of the tigers, the brother and sister married and had many children. They allowed their sons to marry their sisters. When a child was born, he took the name of the animal seen by the parents at that moment; or, if the parents were on their way to the west, the surname was West, and so on.

For a long time brothers continued to marry sisters; but their children were sickly and skinny and many died. The head of the clan, fearing that the race might eventually become extinct, instructed his relatives to offer buffaloes to the spirits.

But the buffalo sacrifices did not help. The clan headman then asked his relatives to abstain from receiving guests and from going out during 1 to 3 days after making offerings to the spirits.

In the meantime, the head of the clan dreamed that the Heavenly Emperor revealed that marriage between brothers and sisters must cease.

The next morning the clan head told his relatives his dream. After deliberation, they fixed the following fines for incest: three buffaloes for a marriage between a brother and sister; two buffaloes for a marriage between two persons with the same grandparents; one buffalo in case of a marriage between two persons having the same great-grandparents.

The customs of offering buffalo sacrifices to the Heavenly Emperor, of abstinence, and of incest fines have been transmitted from generation to generation down to the present time.[6]

Factual History

The Hroi area was formerly dominated by the Kingdom of Champa, which maintained good relations with many inland tribal groups, such as the Rhade, Jarai, and Bahnar, influencing their culture patterns. These tribes, in turn, provided the Kingdom of Champa with soldiers to fight the Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) who were then moving south along the coast. The Cham, the descendants of the people of Champa, still live in and around the region inhabited by the Hroi.

In their rough mountain region, the Hroi have enjoyed a relative isolation from the Vietnamese of the coastal lowlands and have not been involved in any uprisings; they fight only to defend themselves against raiders from neighboring tribal groups.[7]

There was no information available referring specifically to the Hroi during the period of the French administration of Indochina. The French set up an administrative system under the control of a Resident General. They established plantations and various industrial, mining, and logging enterprises which soon began to thrive and to expand inland into the areas of the native highland groups. In the highland plateau areas French entrepreneurs established rubber, tea, and coffee plantations. Some regions were converted into hunting preserves.

In 1923 the French issued a manifesto providing that the social structure of the various highland groups was to be respected; that intertribal trade and trade with the ethnic Vietnamese were to be regulated; that tribal laws were to be codified and used in the administration of justice in the highlands; and that educational, medical, and agricultural assistance would be given to the tribal peoples. The provisions of the manifesto were generally observed by the French, although some plantations continued to encroach upon tribal lands until the expulsion of the French in 1954.[8]

Settlement Patterns

The Hroi live in villages composed of houses containing several nuclear family groups (father, mother, and offspring); unlike the other Bahnar subgroups, they do not have a communal house (*rong*) located at the center of the village. Among the Hroi, communal activities take place in or near the house of the village chief. Their villages also contain chicken coops, pig sties, and granaries.

The Hroi house, built on pilings above the ground, is rectangular and from 30 to 60 feet in length. All doors face to the south. A porchlike platform is usually built out from the main door of the house, and access is by means of ladders from the ground. The sides and floors of the houses are of woven bamboo; light is admitted through small openings in the loosely woven walls.

The interior of the house is divided into compartments separated by bamboo screens. The hearth of the owner is to the right of the main entrance; the married children all have their own hearths. Tools, baskets, and jars are kept in the compartments where the couples sleep. A house is usually inhabited by the owning couple, their unmarried offspring, and their married daughters with their husbands and children.[9]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Hroi are a short—5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 6 inches—sturdy people with light brown skin. Their average weight is about 115 pounds; their hair is black, usually long, and tied into a chignon on the back of the head. Generally the upper front teeth are filed down almost to the gum line, although in recent years this custom has been dying out. At an early age earlobes are pierced and the opening is progressively enlarged until the earlobes may even touch the shoulder. Reportedly this custom is also no longer favored by the younger tribesmen. The chests of adults are scarred from self-inflicted cuts, a mourning custom which is observed at the funeral of a relative.[1]

Health

The health of the Hroi who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene practices are rudimentary.

The principal disease among the Hroi is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal area. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal. The other, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[2]

The three types of typhus found in the Hroi area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[3]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, rheumatism, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the area.[4] Communicable diseases occasionally sweep through the tribal area in epidemic proportions.[5]

Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and sexual hygiene.[6]

Nutritional diseases are widespread in this area. Although intake of calcium and iron is apparently satisfactory, deficiencies in the intake of thiamine, riboflavin, and vitamins A and C have been reported.[7]

Dental diseases are common and severe, causing loosening and loss of teeth.[8]

Like other highland tribal peoples, the Hroi believe that illness is caused by the activities of evil spirits and certain people called O-Ma-Lai with special evil power. Illnesses caused by spirits are believed to be punishment for the violation of traditional law or taboos.

The Hroi sorcerer, the practitioner of tribal medicine, divines the spirit causing the illness and prescribes appropriate placating sacrifices.

Sorcerers also handle illnesses caused by an O-Ma-Lai—ailments associated with the intestines, stomach, and liver—recommending the kind of gifts the O-Ma-Lai requires from the family of the sick person.[9]

The divinations of the Hroi sorcerers vary according to region. To determine the spirit involved, the sorcerer often holds a chicken egg in his hand and says, "This sickness is caused by Yang Dak." Then he squeezes the egg; if the egg breaks, indicating Yang Dak is the responsible spirit, the sorcerer then designates the appropriate sacrifice. Animal sacrifices are conducted by the members of the family of the sick person.[10]

Psychological Characteristics

The conduct of the Hroi is closely associated with their religious beliefs; all activities have religious implications. The influence of the spirits must be considered before any action is initiated, for the simplest activity may require elaborate preparation. Moreover, the tribesmen are not accustomed to thinking as individuals: decisions are made on the basis of the family or village group—not on the basis of the individual.

The Hroi in the area between the railroad and the coastal plain were characterized by one source as very lazy.[11] This source noted that when during a famine a village of this group was offered rice, to be fetched from another place, the villagers asked that the rice be brought to them.[12] This incident may, however, have indicated the extent of physical damage the famine wrought, rather than the laziness the author implied.

The eastern Hroi are reportedly very peaceful and reluctant to engage in fighting.[13] In the region west of the railroad, the Hroi are reportedly much more active, vigorously defending their villages against raids.[14]

Another difference between the two Hroi groups has been observed—their attitude toward visitors. The Hroi near the coast greet a visitor with very little attention. If he goes to a house, someone will nonchalantly spread out a mat for him. If the visitor asks a question, he gets a short answer; the tribesmen make no effort to entertain him and, if he needs something, he must ask for it.

On the other hand, the inland Hroi receive a visitor much more warmly. He is greeted and invited into the village for a chat; he is asked what his needs are, and every effort is made to satisfy those needs. The tribespeople take turns conversing with him; if he wants entertainment, the Hroi organize it to please him.[15]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Hroi social structure is based on the family and the village, a society similar to that of the other Bahnar groups. Although village chiefs are male, both men and women share authority within the family and hold property. Descent is matrilineal, with the importance of females manifested in other ways. While relations with neighboring tribes are not always friendly, a non-Hroi tribesman marrying into the Hroi group is promptly absorbed into Hroi society.[1]

Kinship System and Tribal Structure

In the matrilineal kinship system of the Hroi the family surname is passed along the female line, and a newly married man resides for at least 3 years, if not longer, with his wife's family. Some surnames are not native to the area but were arbitrarily assigned by earlier government functionaries for administrative convenience. For example, *mang*, meaning "savage," is a common surname in the Van Canh area.

Use of surnames facilitates the avoidance and detection of incestuous marriages.[2] Fines for incest are expensive, ranging from three buffaloes in the case of brothers and sisters, to one buffalo for fourth-generation cousins, to a pig and chicken for fifth-generation cousins. In addition, one white chicken must be offered to the spirits. Thus it appears that the immediate kin group extends only to the fifth generation of common ancestry.[3]

There is no overall tribal structure superimposed over the villages, and ties between villages are limited to those of intermarriage and other social relationships. Each village has four classes, ranked in order of importance: functionaries, sorcerers, common people, and servants. The village unity exists for mutual defense, mutual aid, or celebrations.

The principal village functionary is the chief. When a village is founded the chief is elected; thereafter his office is hereditary. Although the chief's orders require strict obedience, a dissident villager—especially a family head—may persuade friends and relatives to move with him to another area, there establishing himself as a new chief.[4]

Although they live like other Hroi, the typical sorcerers are highly respected and considered to belong to a class higher than that of the average tribesman.

Debtors become servants of their creditors, performing whatever tasks are appropriate to their sex. Unless they save enough money to pay off their debt, indentured servants remain in their creditor's household for life.[5]

Place of Men, Women, and Children in Society

Although men and women have clearly defined roles, both share family authority and both can own property, either individually or jointly. Each spouse has the right to dispose of his or her private property; common property can only be used or disposed of by mutual consent.[6] Work is allocated according to sex; even servants perform chores on the basis of sex. Older people are expected to work harder than young people—except those who are servants—lest they "die in vain," or die without having done their part for family and village.[7]

Men have specific responsibility for the heavy work of clearing the fields and raising the crops; they also find the building materials and construct the houses. Men hunt, fish, and collect bamboo or rattan for basketweaving. During festivals they gather to slaughter the buffaloes and prepare the banquet.

Women are responsible for the lighter agricultural tasks and for household chores. For female-designated tasks women do not seek or expect the help of male servants. The tasks restricted to women are carrying water, grinding rice, preparing meals, and weaving baskets. It is customary to prepare food for only 1 day; rice is ground only once a day. During the planting season, women also work with their husbands in the field.[8]

Children are assigned specific responsibilities according to their sex: heavy work for boys and household assistance for girls.[9]

Marriage

Marriage is initiated by the man's family through marriage brokers. A man may marry into another village if he can persuade members of that village to assist him. Then two villagers, selected by the boy's family, approach the girl's family, and if an agreement is reached, a wedding date is set.

A Hroi marriage ceremony consists of feasts in the houses of both families, offerings to the spirits, and an exchange of wedding bracelets. The bride's family, accompanied by five marriage brokers striking gongs, goes to the groom's house in a procession. The bride herself must wear very ragged, dirty clothes, while everyone else is colorfully dressed. After eating and drinking with the groom's family, the procession regroups and proceeds to the bride's house. The family of the bride walks at the head of the line, followed by the groom, his best men, and his family. The groom's hand is tied to that of one of his brothers-in-law until they reach the bride's house, where they have another banquet. Under the direction of the sorcerer and the village chief, offerings are then made to the spirits. The bride and groom exchange wedding bracelets. Still another feast is eaten by the families while the bride pretends to hide; eventually the marriage brokers find her and bring her to her husband.[10]

Generally, the husband resides with his wife's family; however, in some areas he reportedly must build his own house after 3 years.[11] Information is not available about what goods, other than bracelets, are exchanged during the marriage proceedings.

Premarital sexual relations are discouraged by fines and the knowledge that any village misfortune, such as the sudden death of some animals, will be blamed upon the guilty lovers. Those guilty of premarital sexual relations are penalized with fines payable to both the village and their parents (compensation for not consulting them). The couple are also required to marry. The parents determine the severity of the fines, which may consist of chickens or pigs.

Divorce

The Hroi permit divorce, which is arranged through a trial conducted by the villagers. For a divorce by mutual consent, the couple return the wedding bracelets to each other and divide the common possessions equally. If a partner refuses to consent to divorce, the complaining spouse may apparently obtain a divorce by reimbursing the other for the entire cost of the wedding.[12]

Pregnancy and Birth

The Hroi east of the railroad build a small house on stilts, attached to the main house by a bridgelike structure, just large enough for the pregnant women and the midwife. Any pregnant women in the family move to this small house at the first sign of labor pains. Among the other Hroi, the separate house for pregnant women adjoins the main house, sharing a common roof and connected simply by a door.[13]

During labor, the Hroi mother is assisted by a midwife; in difficult births, a sorcerer is called. The sorcerer divines, by squeezing an egg, what the spirits want to eat. If the egg is broken, pigs, chickens, or buffaloes are slaughtered and offered to the spirits. If the egg does not break when squeezed, the Hroi consider the case hopeless, do nothing more, and let the mother wait for the spirit of death to come for her.

After giving birth, the mother must drink solutions derived from roots and leaves. If the mother and child are safe and healthy, offerings are made to the spirits. In the eastern or coastal Hroi area, the new mother must refrain from eating buffalo, goat, or pork for 1 month. She need not work, at least until her baby can crawl; only in very poor families are mothers obliged to work after only 1 month of rest.

Death and Burial

After a death, the whole Hroi village joins the family in its mourning rites. Young men find timber for a coffin; others mourn over the corpse and then help slaughter buffaloes and pigs. For offerings to a dead person, no sorcerer is required; the tribespeople merely gather around the corpse and say:

> Farewell to you. We offer you part of the wealth.
> Take it with you. Death is decided by Heaven.
> No one wants death. Go away, do not come back
> to the village to haunt us.[14]

After the offerings to the dead are made, liquor and pieces of meat are placed in the mouth of the corpse,[15] Now the mourners eat and drink joyfully and then weep and wail again.

The corpse is taken to the grave in a mat; at the gravesite the corpse and old clothes of the deceased are placed in the coffin, the face of the person being turned upward. After the burial a tube is forced through the loose dirt to the coffin; food is placed in it for the dead person.[16] When they return to their families, all mourners except the immediate family of the deceased feel they have fulfilled their obligations to the dead person.[17]

A hut with carved pillars is sometimes built above the grave. Here the personal belongings of the dead person are placed, after having been torn or crushed. In some villages, a temporary roof is built above the grave.

Three or four months after the burial, hired workers build a new hut with a high roof with many woven flowers and a high stake fence, on which statues and wooden animals are placed.

Family mourning periods are extensive: 1 to 4 months for any relative, 1 year for a parent, and 2 to 3 years for a spouse. Hroi in mourning are forbidden to wear bracelets or collars, to participate in social affairs, or to listen to singing. During the mourning period, widows or widowers wishing to remarry must reimburse the family of the dead spouse for all the expenditures pertaining to the original wedding.

Daily Routine

When not engaged in hunting or housebuilding, Hroi men work in the fields and the women in the village. Although there are only two meals a day, the women spend much time preparing food. During the busy agricultural season, the men wait for the first meal of the day, then go out to work the fields until nightfall. At other times, they hunt or fish, weave baskets, play with the children, or simply sit around smoking or talking. All transactions with the outside temporal world are left to the village chief; all transactions with the spirits, to the sorcerers. Periodic festivals, marriages, and funerals break the routine.

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Hroi activities are regulated by numerous customs and taboos. There are prescribed methods and procedures governing everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Hroi have passed down these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the Hroi are constantly trying to avoid actions, activities, and contacts with objects or animals that they believe might displease the spirits. Tribesmen regularly in contact with outsiders may not observe the tribal customs and taboos as closely as tribesmen living in greater isolation.

Dress

Hroi dress varies according to location. Among those who live in the region between the railroad and the coastal plain, the men wear a loincloth made of a length of black material having white and red stripes across each end. Women wear a black skirt which is decorated along the seams with embroidered white flowers and red dots; the front of the skirt has a large woven flower design, and on the back of the skirt is another embroidered flower.[1]

Both men and women wear dark blue long-sleeved coats, open at the front and decorated with white flowers and red dots. Women's coats are somewhat longer in front than in back.

In the winter, as protection against the cold mountain air, both men and women wrap felt blankets around their shoulders.

Both sexes also wear turbans and necklaces of glass beads. Few tribesmen wear copper and silver brackets and necklaces.[2]

The tribespeople in the western portion of the Hroi area wear clothing somewhat different from that mentioned above. Here, the men wear loincloths of white material with stripes lengthwise along the edges and down the center. The women wear blue skirts with only small designs on the front. There is no embroidery at the seams.[3]

Here the women wear dark blue hip-length coats. Jewelry for this group consists of strings of glass beads and copper bracelets.[4]

Tribal Folklore

Traditional Hroi legends, proverbs, and riddles are transmitted in the form of poetry from generation to generation and exert a great influence upon the tribespeople. From childhood, the Hroi hear the legends, stories, laws, and proverbs of their particular group.

Folk tales and legends are customarily told in the evening, around the family hearth—long, poetic tales of the origin of the world, of legendary and human heroes, of the spirits, and of animals (like Aesop's fables).[5] An example of a Hroi folk tale is as follows:

The Story of the Rice Plant

In the early days, there was a strange big flower on earth, around which hungry men gathered twice a day; the men smelled the flower and were fed.

One day, a spirit came down, gave men a rice seed, and taught them how to plant it.

Soon the rice seed became a rice plant. Men smelled it and felt comfortable. But they did not dare to eat it. Meanwhile, the rice plant produced many rice seeds, which in turn produced many rice plants.

The smell of rice was pleasant. Men deliberated and decided to boil the leaves from the rice plant and drink the solution. Now they felt even more comfortable. Gradually, they experimented further with the rice plant. They ground the rice seed into a kind of flour and ate it, finding it tasty, but the husk choked them; then they got rid of the husk and steamed the rice. Luckily, it turned out to be delicious as well as nutritious.

From that time on, man has known how to plant and eat rice.[6]

Eating and Drinking Customs

The Hroi generally eat two meals a day: the first, at about 8:30 or 9:00 in the morning; and the second, between 7:00 and 9:00 in the evening. A light snack of corn or potatoes may be eaten in the middle of the day while the tribesmen are working in the fields.[7]

Rice with salt is the staple of the Hroi diet. Vegetables are used in soups and meat is eaten after sacrifices.

Water is the usual beverage of the Hroi, but at sacrifices they drink rice wine brewed in antique pottery jars. In the order of their importance, all celebrants drink the rice wine through long straws. A sacrifice is considered ineffectual and the spirits are offended if any Hroi abstains from drinking rice wine during a sacrifice.

The Hroi usually eat with their fingers; very few use bowls or dishes. The cooked rice is placed either on areca leaves or in baskets with a bag of salt. All Hroi gather around and eat with their fingers, rolling the rice into little balls. If the rice balls are too hot to put into their mouths, the Hroi throw them into the air to cool them.[8]

Customs Relating to Poisons

From the sap of the *cong* tree, Hroi tribesmen make a poison that is mixed with red pepper. They believe that this sap is extremely powerful if taken from the tree on the ninth day of the first month of the lunar year. The traditional antidote for this poison is to eat a frog, a worm, or some chicken droppings.[9]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

Like the other Montagnard peoples, the Hroi have an animistic religion which dominates their daily lives. Good spirits, evil spirits, rituals, ceremonies, taboos, and sacrifices—all these form the Hroi religion.

Unlike the neighboring Bahnar groups, the Hroi worship one major spirit or *yang*: however, minor spirits are also respected and mentioned in prayers for the sick.

Spirits, cruel or benevolent, are believed to inhabit all animate and inanimate objects as well as geographic features and natural occurrences such as lightning, thunder, rain, and wind.[1]

The Hroi hate and fear the O-Ma-Lai (ghosts and devils), which they believe feed on human bowels and livers. Two kinds of O-Ma-Lai menace the Hroi: the living O-Ma-Lai and the ghosts. The living O-Ma-Lai may be man, woman, or child, even though the essential quality of being O-Ma-Lai can be inherited through male descent only. Thus the children of a female O-Ma-Lai will not be O-Ma-Lai unless their father is also. They live essentially like normal people, but by other tribesmen they are considered devils who wander about at night in search of prey. Should an O-Ma-Lai get into a house and come upon some unfortunate person, he will eat his bowels and liver. Some O-Ma-Lai are believed to be more powerful than others.

There is only one O-Ma-Lai ghost, invisible and very dangerous, who waits in ambush at night in a tree, ready to shoot an arrow at anyone coming within its range. The victim will die immediately and the O-Ma-Lai will eat his heart, liver, or bowels. When threatened by an O-Ma-Lai, a person may be helped either by the O-Ma-Lai itself or by a skilled sorcerer.[2]

Religious Ceremonies

Many Hroi religious ceremonies are associated with the agricultural cycle; these include major sacrifices to the spirits before and after clearing the land for cultivation. Two important festivals occur during the year: one corresponding to the Vietnamese New Year (the first or second month of the lunar year) and one in June or July in a two-night celebration to worship the spirits.[3]

For festivals, a platform or altar is set up in the middle of the village. Since the most important ceremonies involve the slaughtering of a buffalo, bamboo ceremonial poles to which the buffalo is usually tied are planted near the altar.

The villagers gather, gongs and drums are played noisily, the village chief (and at times the sorcerer) intones prayers, and the people sing and dance. When the buffalo is slaughtered, its blood is poured into a bowl on the platform, its meat is prepared for the feast, and its head is placed on the platform, where it is left to rot. Much rice wine is consumed and the festivals often continue into the second night.

For lesser ceremonies the rituals are simpler, the offerings consisting of pigs or chickens, and it is permissible to take the offerings home to be eaten.[4]

Religious Practitioners

The ceremonies of the agricultural cycle and important special celebrations are conducted by the village chief, sometimes accompanied by the sorcerer or *bojau*.[5] Healing ceremonies, however, are the unique responsibility of the bojau. While in a state of trance, the bojau determines the nature of the illness, identifies the evil spirit responsible, and determines appropriate sacrifices for the cure.[6]

The bojau's skill remains a family specialty, transmitted from generation to generation.[7]

Missionary Contact

Roman Catholic missionaries have had missions in the general area of the Hroi since the middle of the 19th century. How much they have accomplished is not clear, for even converted villagers have only modified their tribal rites, not abandoned them. The Hroi consider missionaries to be Western sorcerers.[8]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Hroi have a subsistence economy based upon the cultivation of dry rice by the slash-and-burn method of agriculture. Rice cultivation is supplemented by vegetable gardens, fishing, hunting, and basketweaving.[1]

Slash-and-burn dry rice cultivation is the principal occupation of the Hroi. Briefly, this technique involves cutting down all vegetation in the new area during the winter months and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as a fertilizer which makes the soil fertile enough to permit crops to be grown for 3 to 4 years. When the fields no longer support a crop, the Hroi move to another area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle, and repeat the slash-and-burn clearing process in the new area.

The Hroi tribesmen plant their rice seeds in holes poked in the soil with sharp pointed sticks (dibble sticks). No plow is used; the root structure is thus undisturbed and erosion is minimized. The summer rains maintain the crop during the growing season. The plot is weeded periodically, and the rice is harvested in the late fall.[2]

The Hroi believe that the entire agricultural cycle requires a succession of sacrifices to promote fertility and to avert crop failure (considered to be a punishment for infractions of tribal laws). Sacrifices are dedicated to the spirit responsible for the current phase of the agricultural cycle and involve the sacrifice of animals, such as chickens, pigs, and buffaloes.

In addition to sacrificing animals, the Hroi observe a number of taboos in connection with dry-rice cultivation. For example, objects used to grind or carry rice may be touched and used only by the members of the family cultivating the rice. When rice is taken from the fields to the house, the person carrying the rice must, when crossing a river or stream, tie a string to a tree and to the rice so that the spirit of the rice will be able to accompany the rice across the stream. It is believed that the rice will be washed away by the current of the stream if it cannot cross by means of the string. If the spirit of the rice were washed away, there would be a crop failure the next year. Also, rice can only be carried into a Hroi village; it cannot be carried past the village.[3]

The Hroi raise vegetables in gardens (which are not subject to religious considerations), fish, hunt, and weave baskets; they fish by using baskets to scoop fish out of the streams.[4]

Hroi men and women weave baskets *(sui)* for storage, for backpacks, and for use in trapping fish. The basket for food storage has a small bottom and a large round opening in the top, is woven of thin bamboo strips, and has a handle. Another loosely woven type is used to store tools and utensils.[5]

Exchange System and Trade

Ordinarily, the Hroi engage in barter, either among themselves or with Vietnamese traders in local markets. Exchange and legal fines have been fixed in terms of buffaloes, jars, gongs, weapons, clothes, and other objects.

The Hroi probably have limited intervillage trade, and they trade with Vietnamese shopkeepers in towns near their area. Items they would buy include gongs, jars, cloth and salt; items they might sell would include vegetables, fish, and baskets.

Property System

Three types of Hroi property are property of the husband, property of the wife, and common property of husband and wife. Property includes such goods as animals, jars, gongs, weapons, jewelry, and clothing. Each spouse may dispose of his own personal property; however, mutual consent is required for the disposal of common property.[6]

The information available did not indicate the system of land ownership among the Hroi. It is probable that the village owns the land and allots it to the various families for cultivation.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

Like other Montagnard groups, the Hroi have no overall political structure uniting their villages. The highest form of political organization among the Hroi is the autonomous village. Although neighboring villages will cooperate with each other, this does not represent political unity.

Village leadership is provided by a village chief. When a village is established, a chief is elected by the villagers; thereafter the position is hereditary.

The heads of the various families in the village serve, because of their position, wisdom, and age, as a council of elders when they meet informally to discuss village interests. The elders serve as a check on the power of the chief.[1]

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapprochement between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government had supported a policy of permitting the Hroi and other tribal groups to be separate administrative entities. Now, however, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

The Vietnamese Government supervises intertribal relations, assigning an official to administer a group of seven or eight villages. Above this administrative level are district and provincial chiefs, completing the administrative hierarchy of the Central Government in tribal areas.

Legal System

Hroi laws are handed down from generation to generation and are, in reality, taboos and prohibitions upon individual behavior to prevent punishment by the spirits. A respected village elder is responsible for judgment and application of the traditional law.[2]

According to Hroi law, a robber or bandit is punished by a fine five or ten times the value of the original theft. If the culprit cannot pay the fine, then he becomes a servant for the victim until his fine is paid.

In a quarrel between two villagers, the elders attempt to mediate the dispute. Should this mediation fail, the parties submit to one of the following trials. The plaintiff and defendant each holds an egg while saying prayers to the spirits. The first egg to break designates the guilty person. In another trial, each party holds a live chicken, then cuts off the chicken's head and puts the chicken in water. The person whose chicken goes to the bottom wins, while the loser is the tribesman whose chicken rises to the top and beats its wings.[3]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under French colonial administration to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences, which could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[4]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[5] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese law for tribal practice. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[6]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[7] When a case is reviewed and a decision is reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[8]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court, "all minor offenses," and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[9]

At the national level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[10]

Subversive Influences

Their isolation and marginal subsistence make the Hroi susceptible to the subversive activities of the Viet Cong. The primary objective of the subversive elements is to win allegiance of the Hroi and to turn the tribesmen into an active, hostile force against the Republic of Vietnam.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals. Usually a slow process, this is achieved by providing community services and medical aid and by adopting tribal mores and customs.

Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the next phase is an intensive propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.[11]

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror, which usually results in passive resistance to the Government or active support for the Viet Cong.[12]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Principal Means of Information Dissemination

The principal means of disseminating information in the Hroi area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning Hroi familiarity with or access to radios. Any radios in operation in the Hroi area were probably brought in by military personnel.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Hroi dialects might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

Effectiveness of Written Communication

Written communication might have some effect on the Hroi. Although most Hroi are illiterate, some of the tribesmen can read Bahnar or Vietnamese. The literate tribesmen could be expected to communicate information contained in written materials to the rest of the tribespeople. Data about the successful use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Hroi should be oriented around the principle of improving conditions in the tribal villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against Viet Cong harassment are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the Hroi. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the village chief and the elders in order to show respect for the tribal political structure. The tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Most Hroi tribesmen would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained: the Hroi resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Hroi tribespeople into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.[1]

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects and programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the

Hroi encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
   b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
   e. Insect and rodent control.
   f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric-light systems.
   c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
   d. Construction of radio broadcasting and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   a. Improve village sanitation.
   b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
   c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   a. Provide basic literacy training.
   b. Provide rudimentary vocational training.
   c. Present information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.
   d. Provide basic citizenship training.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Hroi could become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen could serve as informers, trackers, and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Hroi could be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership they could, particularly the western group, be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat unit.

In the past, the western Hroi were considered capable fighters, whether fighting offensively in raids against other groups or defensively within their villages. These tribesmen reportedly take great pride in their hunting and fighting abilities. The eastern Hroi, on the other hand, are a very peaceful people with no reported experience in warfare.

When psychological pressures to win Hroi support fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. Frequently, the Hroi yield and cooperate with the Viet Cong; without Government training and support, they do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong. Hroi villages have no able organization for defense except those equipped, trained, and organized by the Government.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

In the past, the Hroi relied upon crossbows, spears, swords, knives, and wooden shields. Hroi knives have a straight blade with a slightly curved hilt almost as long as the blade. Hroi crossbows are larger and stronger than those of most other Montagnard tribes. Arrows are bamboo with one end sharply pointed; the other end has a leaf tied to it. Circular wooden shields, about 3 feet in diameter, have two inside straps for the arm.[1] The Hroi are also familiar with the use of traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks used as foot traps. Some Hroi may have received modern military training from the French, but there was no documented information on this question.

Their relatively small stature limits the type of weapons the Hroi can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine.

The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning automatic rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled, carried by two or more men, and then quickly reassembled.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Hroi learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HROI

Every action of the Hroi tribesman has a special significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Hroi may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Hroi are listed below.

Official

1. The initial visit to a Hroi village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Hroi. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of the tribespeople quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process, requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some credit for civic action projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Hroi should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Hroi ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Hroi house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Hroi women. This could create distrust and dissension.
8. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Hroi property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Hroi dialects. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Hroi are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Hroi areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and should have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), p. 13.
2. Moc Huong [Lam Ngoc Trang], *Customs and Mores of the Bahnar People* (Hue: U.S. Department of the Army Translation I–1330, 2198515, 1960), p. 2.
3. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 249.
4. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 82–84.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–71.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. Moc Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12; Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 13; U.S. Information Service, *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands* (Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962), p. 18.
3. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
4. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1046–47.
5. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–5.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
8. Joseph Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), pp. 198–244, 325–85.
9. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–30.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient.* XLV (1952), pp. 487–97.
2. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
5. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1026–29.
6. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–13.
7. U.S. Department of Defense, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense, *Republic of Viet-Nam: Nutritional Survey, October-December 1959* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., July 1960), p. 100.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–13.

9. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–48.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–50.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–35.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 36–38.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–26.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1046–52.
6. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–64.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

VI. RELIGION

1. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–44.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
6. Dam Bo., *op. cit.*, pp. 1177–79.
7. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
8. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, pp. 452–55.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
2. Pierre-Bernard Lafont, "The 'Slash-and-Burn' *(Ray)* Agricultural System of the Mountain Populations of Central Vietnam," *Proceedings of the Ninth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association*, VII (Bangkok: Secretariat Ninth Pacific Science Congress, Department of Science 1959), pp. 56–59.

3. Huong, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–51.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. *Huong, op. cit.*, pp. 48–49.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
3. *Ibid.*
4. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
5. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 19–21.
6. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.
12. *Ibid.*

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information, *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962* (Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962), p. 119.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Huong, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE HROI

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Coedés, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Guilleminet, Paul P. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum.* Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient.* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Huong, Moc [Lam Ngoc Trang]. *Customs and Mores of the Bahnar People.* Hue: U.S. Department of the Army Translation I–1330, 2198515, 1960.

Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. "The 'Slash-and-Burn' *(Ray)* Agricultural System of the Mountain Populations of Central Vietnam," *Proceedings of the Ninth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association,* VII. Bangkok: Secretariat, Ninth Pacific Science Congress, Department of Science 1959, 56–59.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

"Malaria in Viet Nam," *Time,* August 20, 1965, 43.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), 13.

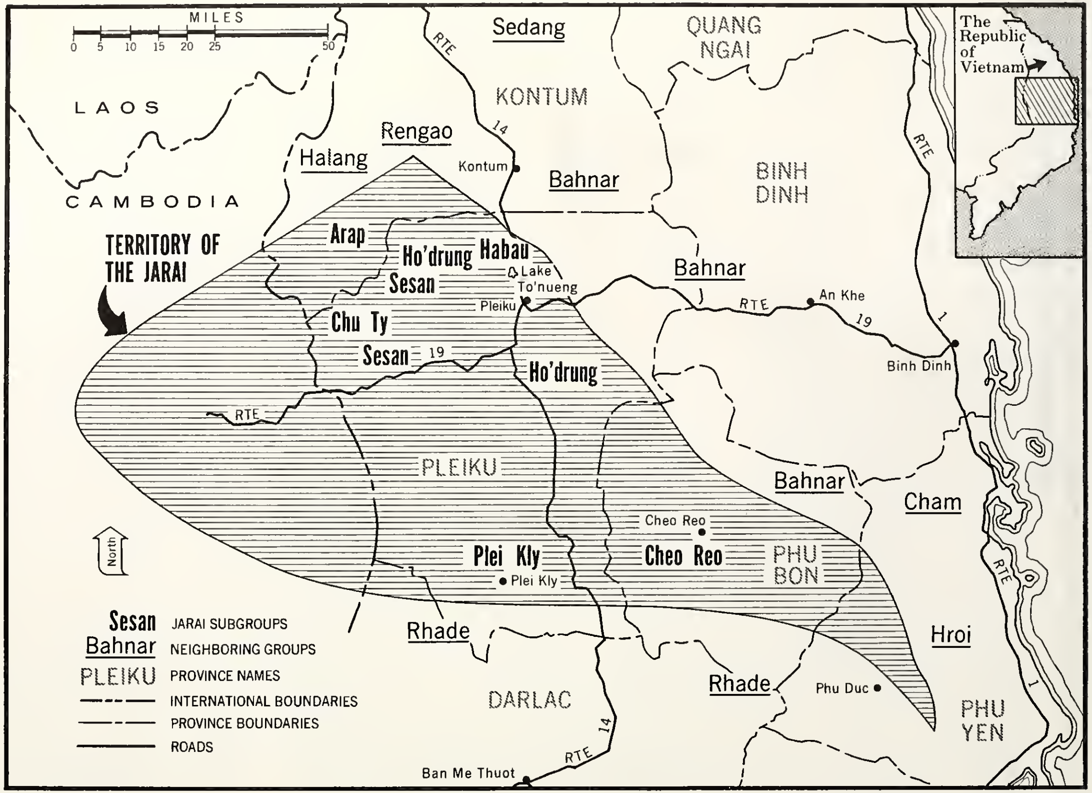
Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information. *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962.* Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962.

Thomas, David. "Classification of Southern Vietnamese Malayo-Polynesian Languages." Saigon: 1961. (Mimeographed.)

U.S. Department of Defense, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense. *Republic of Viet-Nam: Nutritional Survey, October-December 1959.* Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., July 1960.

U.S. Information Service. *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands.* Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West.* New York: Macmillan Company, 1963.


MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
LAOS
CAMBODIA
Halang
Rengao
Sedang
KONTUM
Kontum
RTE
14
Bahnar
QUANG NGAI
BINH DINH
The Republic of Vietnam
TERRITORY OF THE JARAI
Arap
Ho'drung
Habau
Sesan
Lake To'nueng
Pleiku
Chu Ty
Sesan
19
Ho'drung
Bahnar
RTE
An Khe
19
Binh Dinh
1
RTE
PLEIKU
Bahnar
Cham
Cheo Reo
Plei Kly
Cheo Reo
PHU BON
Plei Kly
North
Sesan JARAI SUBGROUPS
Bahnar NEIGHBORING GROUPS
PLEIKU PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
Rhade
DARLAC
Rhade
Hroi
Phu Duc
PHU YEN
Ban Me Thuot
RTE
14
1

The Jarai Subgroups

CHAPTER 7. THE JARAI

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Numbering approximately 150,000 persons, the Jarai form one of the largest tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam. The Jarai tribe consists of seven distinct subgroups and is spread throughout a large section of the Central Highlands. Of Malayo-Polynesian ethnic stock, the Jarai speak a language related to that of the Rhade, another large and important tribe which lives south of the Jarai.

The Jarai are a matrilineal group and live in villages which, individually, form the highest political structure attained by the Jarai. They have a subsistence economy based primarily on the slash-and-burn cultivation of dry rice. The Jarai also engage in hunting, fishing, and a limited amount of trade.

The Jarai are an intensely religious people who believe they live in constant interrelation with animistic spirits. In the past, the Jarai had a reputation for being fierce, aggressive warriors, and until recently the Jarai have remained relatively isolated from outside influences.

Name and Size of Group

In their own tribal language, the tribe's name is Nak-drai. They are called Charai by the Vietnamese, Djarai by the French, and Chalai by the Laotians. Jarai is the spelling used by American observers.

Anthropologists generally agree upon the following Jarai subgroups: Ho'drung, Habau, Arap, Sesan, Chu Ty, Plei Kly, and Cheo Reo. The entire Jarai tribe numbers approximately 150,000.[1]

Location

The Jarai tribe inhabits an extensive area including most of the provinces of Pleiku and Phu Bon, the southwestern corner of Kontum Province, and the eastern portion of the Cambodian province of Ratanakiri. Scattered Jarai settlements are also found in the northern areas of Darlac Province and the western part of Phu Yen Province. There are three major areas of Jarai concentration—around the towns of Pleiku and Plei Kly in Pleiku Province and Cheo Reo in Phu Bon Province.

The Jarai Ho'drung are found in the region around the town of Pleiku; the Habau in the Lake To'nueng area; the Arap in the Plei Tell area, in northern Pleiku Province, and in the eastern part of Ratanakiri Province in Cambodia; the Plei Kly in southern Pleiku Province and northern Darlac Province; and the Cheo Reo in the region of Cheo Reo in Phu Bon Province.[2] See the map for the location of Jarai subgroups and neighboring groups.

Neighboring groups include the Halang to the northwest, the Rengao and Sedang to the north, the Bahnar to the northeast and east, the Hroi to the east, and the Rhade to the south. The Jarai in the eastern portion of the tribal area also have contact with the Cham and Vietnamese. The western portion of Jarai territory is bordered by various tribal peoples of Cambodia.[3]

Terrain Analysis

The Jarai tribe is located on the northern part of the Darlac Plateau, which is separated from the coast by the Annamite Mountains. Ranging from 1,000 to 2,500 feet in altitude, the Darlac Plateau has a foundation of basalt covered by reddish soil in some areas and a granite and rhyolite rock base (volcanic rock) covered with a thin mantle of soil in others. Above the generally rolling land of the plateau north of Pleiku, rise a number of extinct volcanoes, some of which contain crater lakes.

In the east, the Jarai area is drained by the Song Ba River and its tributaries. The Song Ba flows eastward through the Annamite Mountains and empties into the South China Sea. In the west, the Jarai area is drained by the Srepok River and some of its tributaries. The Srepok flows westward into Cambodia and joins the Mekong River.

Two important highways cross the Jarai area. National Route 14, a major north-south highway, runs from Ban Me Thuot through Pleiku and on to Kontum. National Route 19 rouns east from the Cambodian border through Pleiku to the coast at Qui Nhon. At this writing, travel on these two highways is often hazardous due to Viet Cong activities.

The climate of the plateau area inhabited by the Jarai is influenced by both the summer (April—October) and winter (mid-September—March) monsoon winds which provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer these winds come mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the rain brought by the summer monsoon. The winter monsoon also provides precipitation, though this rainfall varies greatly. On the whole, the Darlac Plateau receives from 50 to 150 inches of precipitation with most rain falling in the higher areas in the north. The greatest rainfall occurs in July and August. There are local elevational variations in rainfall and wind patterns.[4] Temperatures in the highland area are lower than along the coastal lowland areas, differing by more than 15 degrees during the winter months.

Much of the Jarai area is covered by monsoon forest which is fairly open and relatively easy to traverse, as it is without dense undergrowth. The monsoon forest turns brown during the dry winter season, and many of the trees lose their leaves. During the summer or rainy season, travel becomes very difficult because of flooding and quagmires—elephants are then the best means of travel. Some of the forest undergrowth is *tranh (Imperata cylindrica)*, a coarse, tall grass used as thatch for the roofs of Jarai houses. Tranh, when young, provides fair herbage. Bamboo growth is frequently found in low, wet areas where the monsoon forest has been cultivated and then abandoned by the tribesmen. In a few years these areas are again covered by forests, for the bamboo protects the seedling trees.[5]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

According to their language and culture, the Jarai may be grouped with the Malayo-Polynesian peoples of the East Indies. The Jarai language is like those of peoples on islands as widely separated as the Philippines and Sumatra, as well as similar to those of the highland tribes of the Raglai and the Rhade.

Opinions vary about the geographic origin of the Malayo-Polynesian peoples in the Indochinese peninsula. Some authorities believe that they migrated from the Indonesian area to Indochina. Others think they originated in the Indian subcontinent, migrated eastward, and then spread from the Indochinese Peninsula to Indonesia and the islands of the Pacific. Still another conjecture is that the tribes migrated to Indochina from China proper. The latter theory holds that the Polynesians were originally settled in the Chinese coastal region of Kwangtung before sailing south and east.

Language

The language spoken by the Jarai falls within the Malayo-Polynesian family of languages. Other mountain tribes speaking related languages include the Raglai and the Rhade. The Cham, descendants of a once powerful kingdom in Indochina, also speak a Malayo-Polynesian language.[1]

The Jarai language has many sounds foreign to English, such as a trilled "r," glottal stops, and the vowel sounds "uh" (ú), and "oo" (ó). However, other sounds are somewhat like English sounds.[2] The Jarai language is understood by neighboring Rhade, Bahnar, and M'nong who have regular commercial contacts with the Jarai. Some Vietnamese merchants or traders in the area may also be familiar with the language.[3]

The Jarai have written language, devised by the French, which generally follows the Vietnamese system of writing. However, the written language is little used; in 1964 a visitor reported only about 500 Jarai tribesmen could read it. Of the few tribesmen who can read their language, most have learned it from missionaries, in Government schools, or from experience in the military or Government service.[4] Since 1960, missionaries have been accelerating efforts to improve Jarai literacy.

Although some Jarai Tribesmen speak Vietnamese, the number is probably less than among tribes such as the Jeh, Sedang, or Hroi who historically have had more contact with the Vietnamese.[5] Recently, as contacts between the Jarai and Vietnamese have increased, a growing number of Jarai have learned to speak Vietnamese.

Some Jarai understand French, but this seems to be limited to tribesmen trained by the French for military duty or to those who were employees of the colonial government.[6] In addition, some tribesmen, especially the younger men, are learning English as Americans in the area develop more and more contacts with them.

Because of the difficulty of the Jarai language and its strangeness to Western ears, a missionary with long experience among the Jarai considers it impossible to learn their language without frequent or long contacts with the tribespeople.[7]

Legendary History

The Jarai myth of the ancient origin of the tribe recounts the story of a flood which covered all the earth. To save themselves from the flood, a Jarai man and wife got into a huge drum, in which they floated for many days. When the waters receded, the man and woman landed on Cu Hodrung, a two-pronged mountain south of Pleiku, which the Jarai call the "belly button of the world." The tribe has remained in the highlands, centered around Pleiku, since that time.

The Jarai also have a legend to explain the superiority of the Vietnamese. According to this legend, there was a sword with its scabbard in a small pool. Both a Vietnamese and a Jarai tried to get the sword; the Vietnamese succeeded, while the Jarai retrieved only the sheath—hence, the Vietnamese, to this day, control the Jarai.

In addition, each clan of the Jarai has a myth to explain its origin, identity, food prohibitions, and other customs and taboos. These legends are considered as folklore in this study and will be discussed in the section on "Customs and Taboos."*

Factual History

Like most of the Montagnard tribes, there is only limited and fragmentary factual material on the Jarai. As far as can be determined, studies of Jarai political and administrative history are almost nonexistent. For the most part, this gap is explained by the lack of documentation before the arrival of the French in the 1860's; the Jarai had no written language before that time. The Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese), who theoretically exercised authority over the Jarai, had, in practice, very little to do with the tribespeople.

Although recorded factual history of the mountain tribes was developed after the French arrived in the area, even this information is incomplete; most investigators found that Jarai ideas of their history are expressed in legends and folktales. Thus, only a brief sketch of the actual history of the Jarai can be given.

---

* See "Tribal Folklore," p. 281.

Before the fall of the Cham Kingdom in the 15th century, the Jarai had little contact with the Annamese although it is probable that the Jarai, as allies of the Cham, fought the Annamese during the long Cham-Annamese wars. The Cham were eventually defeated by the Annamese, who then consolidated the entire country under a succession of dynasties.

Traditionally, the Annamese never wanted to inhabit the highland regions of Indochina; thus, conflict between the Jarai and the ethnic Vietnamese was kept to a relative minimum. Yet all Annamese dynasties consistently followed policies to restrict the tribesmen to the mountain areas, to exact tribute, and to control and monopolize all trade with them. These policies were only partially successful for the following reasons: the historical isolation of the tribes, the traditional antipathy between the tribes and the Annamese, the mutual suspicion and distrust of the tribes for each other, and the high incidence of malaria, which kept the Annamese out of the Jarai territory. Consequently, although the Jarai raided weaker neighboring tribes or villages, they did not molest the Annamese except in Jarai territory.

After the arrival of the French in the 1860's and during the period of instability while the French were taking control of the country, Jarai raids increased. By the 1880's, the French were firmly in control and took steps to eliminate Jarai aggression. However, the Jarai continued their raids even though it was dangerous for them.[8]

The Jarai, emboldened by a few successes, ambushed an important convoy bringing supplies to a French religious mission at Kontum. Father Guerlach, a French missionary in Kontum, called upon the neighboring Bahnar and with a force of 1,200 (reportedly the largest force of Montagnards ever united under one leader) attacked and defeated the Jarai in 1897. From then on, the supply route from the coast into the Kontum area was free of Jarai interference.

To halt further Jarai aggression and to check Jarai expansion, the mission at Kontum encouraged the Bahnar, the Rengao, and the Bonom to form a defensive alliance. The French administrator in Hue later recognized this agreement.[9]

The most serious incident involving the Jarai and the French occurred in 1904, when Odend'hal, a French official attached to the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, traveled into Jarai territory without military escort to persuade a Jarai religious leader, the Sadet Oi At, to submit to French rule. Odend'hal was warmly received by the Sadet; but after drinking much ceremonial wine, he became sick and refused further offers of wine and chicken. The refusal annoyed the Sadet, as did Odend'hal's request to see the sacred sword, symbol of the Sadet's office. The Jarai interpreted a letter Odend'hal wrote to another French official as a request for reinforcements, and on April 7, 1904, they attacked and killed him. This murder brought more French troops into the Jarai area, and the Jarai were soon subdued.[10]

Historically, the Jarai have been the first mountain tribe to break away from the authority of an empire in decline and the last to succumb to a new overlord. Early Jarai accounts tell of their wars to break away from Cham domination during the 14th century. At one time or another, the Jarai have paid tribute to Cham, Cambodians, Annamese, and French, and then rebelled against them.[11]

Patterns of Jarai Migration

Despite the general paucity of factual information, available sources indicate that in modern times the Jarai in Vietnam have consistently, although very gradually, migrated westward toward the Cambodian border. There are several reasons for the migratory movement of the Jarai. Reputedly warlike and predatory, the Jarai have invaded the territory of their weaker neighbors. The major reason, however, appears to be that when increased numbers of outsiders enter the tribal area the Jarai tend to move away. The Jarai, like other mountain tribes, are fiercely independent, resent strangers, and generally avoid contact with them. This attitude is especially true in their relations with the Vietnamese.

Under French rule, the Jarai area was included in the Domaine de la Couronne which encompassed the entire High Plateau. Here, the French created a hunting preserve; established tea, rubber and tobacco plantations; and restricted entry of Vietnamese, except as plantation workers or as minor merchants. The Jarai, like other mountain tribes, vigorously resisted settlement of their tribal areas by outsiders; in counteraction, the Jarai continued to migrate westward into Cambodia. However, early in the 20th century, the Jarai were pacified, and the westward migration abated somewhat.

The Jarai were subject to few restrictions under the French and apparently appreciated the French policy of denying the Vietnamese entry into the highland areas.

During the Indochina War (1946-1954) the situation in the highlands again became unstable. Some Jarai, either as individuals or as village units, allied themselves with the Viet Minh or the French forces. Still others, taking advantage of the general insecurity of the period and of the breakdown in French authority and control, once again turned to banditry and the plundering of neighboring villages. However, many Jarai, by this time almost completely pacified and nonaggressive, fled into the forest to avoid taking sides in a war they thought was not their concern. Some tribesmen again moved westward into Cambodia in order to escape the fighting.

After the war, the situation in the Republic of Vietnam gradually became stable. By 1956, as the Government began to exert its authority and control, many Jarai tribesmen returned to their villages and to their traditional way of life. However, the westward migration of the Jarai has resumed in the past few years.

Settlement Patterns

Jarai villages—called *plei* in the porth and *bon* in the south—vary in size from 4 to 50 multifamily dwellings called longhouses.[12] Each longhouse is inhabited by the extended family group—the female members of the family plus their husbands and young children. Thus, in a longhouse all the women are related to each other in a direct line; all the men are from other clans and families and have married into the female group. In a small village, all the families may belong to the same clan; in a very large village, the families belong to a number of different clans, with one clan being economically (and hence socially and politically) predominant.

Jarai villages are usually located near a good water source. Normally, the choice of the location for a village and the arrangement of houses within it are decided by the village elders, rather than by a tribal leader or the Central Government. The principal determining factor is religion. Only after the wishes of the spirits have been ascertained—through divination in accordance with tribal beliefs—is the decision made. Villages may be moved periodically within the lands controlled by the village, but seldom does a village move outside the immediate locale. During the interval between the abandonment of one village and the construction of another, the Jarai live on their cultivated lands in temporary shelters which are also used as living quarters during the planting and harvest seasons.

Jarai villages have various boundary marks. Before the French pacified the area, villages were heavily fortified and bounded by a fence of trees, walls of earth, and a stockade. After pacification, villages were usually surrounded by only a hedge. Now villages are again fortified, this time with defenses suitable for modern warfare.[13]

A Jarai village consists of a group of longhouses, rice storehouses, and enclosures for animals. Like those of the Rhade tribe, houses are oriented in a north-south direction, are rectangular in shape, and are constructed of bamboo on pilings from 8 to 10 feet above the ground. The selection of the site for a house in-

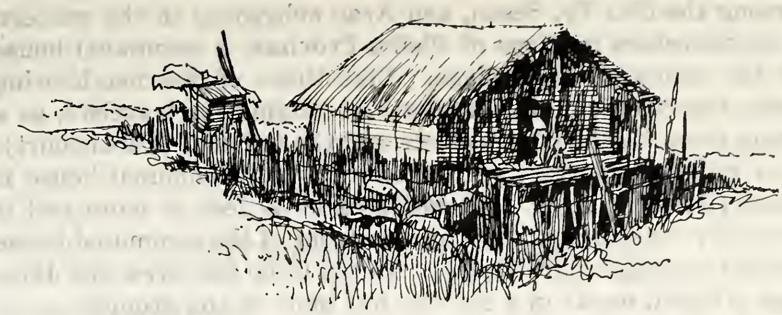


Figure 11. Jarai longhouse.

volves divination to learn the will of the spirits; a house must be placed where it will not incur the wrath of the spirits. The size of the family determines the size of the house—some are as long as 100 feet. At each end of the longhouse is a platform or patio with ladders for access to the ground. Inside, at one end of the house, is a large common room where guests are received and religious ceremonies performed. Here also is a long bench as well as rice wine jars, gongs, and weapons. Along one side of the house is a long corridor, and off of it are partitioned rooms in each of which lives a nuclear family—mother, father, and children. The longhouse has a thatched roof with no openings for the passage of smoke: smoke blows through the loosely woven bamboo sides of the house.

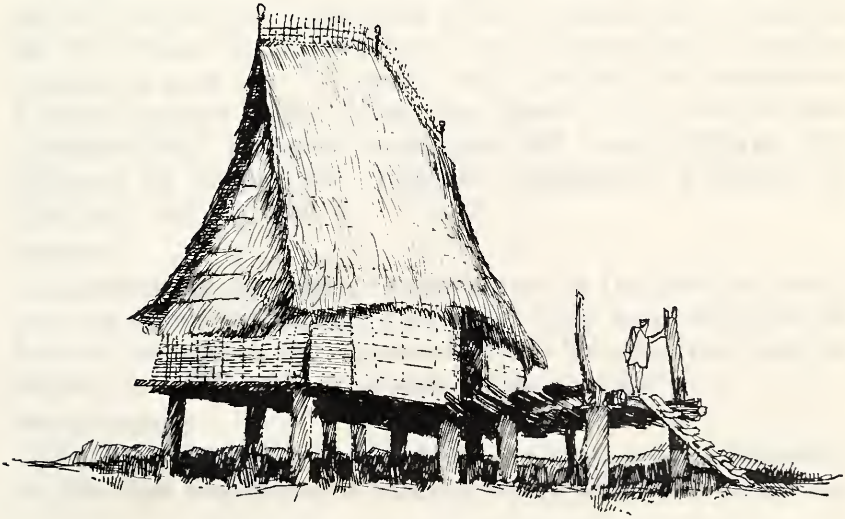


Figure 12. Jarai communal house.

Among the Chu Ty, Sesan, and Arap subgroups in the western and northwestern portions of Pleiku Province, a communal house is in the center of the village. Like those of the neighboring Bahnar, the communal house serves as lodging for travelers, as a meeting place for the village elders and the tribunal (tribal court), and as sleeping quarters for bachelors. The communal house is characterized by a high, thatched roof of 30 feet or more and is very solidly constructed. The area in front of the communal house is used as a village market place. In the Cheo Reo area, the Jarai village tribunal meets in a circular hut built on the ground.

Other structures in Jarai villages include storage huts for rice, chicken coops, log cages for keeping pigs at night, and pens for cattle and buffalo.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Jarai males are generally the same size as Vietnamese but have a sturdier build. They average about 5 feet 5 inches in height. They are generally a very strong people with strong calves, well-developed chests, and strong arms. Their feet are usually quite wide. Their skin pigmentation varies from light to very dark brown, and they have very wide noses. They have dark, coarse hair that ranges from straight to curly, and their eyes are usually brown.[1]

Health

On the whole, the health of Jarai tribesmen is poor. The tribe suffers from many diseases: skin irritations, respiratory ailments, leprosy (almost 10 percent of the tribe), malaria, typhoid, cholera, dysentery, tuberculosis, yaws, and ailments resulting from vitamin and iodine deficiencies.

The Jarai believe that the activities of evil spirits cause illness. To cure an illness, it is necessary to find which spirit is the cause and what sacrifice must be made.*

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam and various missionary groups have made some effort to improve the health of the tribe; however, the isolation of Jarai groups limits the effectiveness of such aid. Generally, the tribesmen are receptive to Western medicine. They have either heard about it or had some experience with it; hence, some Jarai will travel relatively long distances for medical aid. However, availability of medical aid is, as yet, relatively limited.

Endurance

According to one source, the endurance of the Jarai is good if they are allowed to set their own pace. They have very good endurance for walking over mountain trails but relatively poor endurance for lifting heavy objects or for running.[2]

Manual Dexterity

The Jarai tribesmen have a high degree of manual dexterity, and they are accustomed to making things with their hands; one of their principal activities is basket weaving, a craft requiring great manual dexterity. They also build their longhouses with only simple cutting instruments, which they handle with great skill.

---

* See "Principal Deities," p. 284.

Psychological Characteristics

For a psychological understanding of the Jarai, it is necessary to recognize the strong family ties that influence the individual tribesmen. In Jarai society, the family is preeminent, socially and economically. Little interest is shown in the individual; he is only part of the family group. Decisions are the business of the family, not of the individual.[3]

The Jarai are reportedly quite industrious and are generally reliable, though slow and methodical, workers. The Jarai ridicule lazy people and appear to try to do their best on any job. They are proud of their work; this pride shows in their homes, in their work in military camps, and in the upkeep of their uniforms and weapons.[4] The young Jarai receiving military training seem eager for knowledge and learn quickly.[5]

Since the individual Jarai submerges his personal wishes in deference to those of the family, it may be said that he is willing to take direction from others. He does so only in terms of submitting to the will of the family—doing only those things best for the family, not himself. When a Jarai group raids another village, the leader of the raid is one of the village bachelors. The tribesmen submit to the leadership of this person who, by reason of his bachelorhood, is not yet considered to be a full-fledged member of the tribe.*

Traditionally, the tribesmen have not submitted to any external authority. This may have been modified by increased contact with non-tribal groups due to the improvement in transportation and military activities in the Jarai area.

In the past, the Jarai were an aggressive people.[6] The Jarai consider numerical superiority very important in any military action: they prefer to attack when they clearly outnumber their opponents and may even avoid conflict if they do not have a large enough force.[7] In a recent study it was reported that the Jarai become emotional in stress situations, such as actions involving modern weapons or patrols subject to ambush.[8] Since the Jarai have a long history of aggressive warfare, this report may not be completely accurate.

When dealing with members of their own village, the Jarai act in accordance with customs involving family and clan allegiances, as well as past history and activities. Primary loyalty is to the family; the individual knows his exact role within the family group and what obligations and expectations result. However, none of this knowledge is available to persons from outside the village: outsiders are strangers and are so treated. In the past the Jarai were suspicious of strangers and had no compunction about killing or robbing them. (Nowadays, this attitude may have changed to one of detachment and observation—their treatment of outsiders now probably depends upon the actions of the strangers.)

---

* See "Class Structure," p. 279.

Certain non-Jarai people live in Jarai villages. Such strangers have been adopted by the village and have the Jarai clan name Kso'r. Although these people are never fully integrated into the tribe, they are afforded protection by the Jarai.

The Jarai respect men whom they believe are favored by the spirits. For example, a family becomes rich because it has the favor of the spirits, and a family poor because it has been marked by their disfavor. Riches are not measured by the number of family possessions but by the number of sacrifices the family has offered. Sacrifices indicate to the Jarai the wealth of a family.

Age is also a basis for respect. The elderly are considered, because of their long experience, to have much knowledge. Age is honored by positions in Jarai village councils.[9]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Among the Jarai there are three social units of importance: the family, the clan, and the village. The basic social unit is the extended family—all the females descended from one particular woman, plus their husbands and children.[1] Usually the entire family lives together in one longhouse. In both social and economic affairs, the family is preeminent: the individual has little voice; his importance rests wholly on his role within the family group. Decisions are made in terms of benefit to the family as a whole, and the solidarity of the family, as a family, rests more on the mother than on the father.[2]

The social unit next in importance is the clan, a number of families bound together by a common name and common customs of prohibition against intermarriage and sexual relations. Each clan has a mythical ancestor and a myth or legend associated with its origin and prohibitions. The clan name is transmitted through the female line; that is, a married man takes the name of his wife's clan as his name. Children of the marriage likewise take the name of their mother's clan.

Members of the same clan may not marry or have sexual relations with one another. If this incest taboo is violated, Jarai tribesmen believe their crops will fail because they consider sexual relations connected with the fertility of the soil as well as with the fertility of the clan.

Clans believe they have alliances, contracts, or agreements with certain animals. Such agreements involve religious considerations and prohibit a clan from eating the animal with which it has an alliance; in return, the spirit of the animal is believed to protect the clan.

The village, the third important social unit, is formed by several families living together for the purposes of defense and mutual aid. Small Jarai villages may be composed of several families belonging to the same clan, while larger villages are composed of many families belonging to several clans. Other ties which bind Jarai families together include loans, debts, multiple contractual or alliance relationships, credits, and various bonds.

Although there is no political unit above the village, villages do have social ties with one another. Marriage restrictions often necessitate going to a neighboring village for marriage partners, which results in family connections between villages. Villages also occasionally make agreements not to attack one another or to facilitate trade, but there appear to be no alliances for common defense.

Clan and Tribal Structure

Except for a few of the Habau subgroup, every Jarai tribesman belongs to a clan. The names of the Jarai clans and regional variations are:

Clan Name	*Regional Name Variation*
Ro'mah	Muah in the Chu Ty area; Guah in the area of the Sesan subgroup.
Ro'chom	Cho'm in the area of Ho'drung subgroup.
Siu	No regional name variation.
Ro'hlan	Glan in the Ho'drung subgroup.
Ko'pa	Puih in the Ho'drung subgroup; Ko'pa and Puih among the Chu Ty.
Ro'-o	Nay in the area of the Cheo Reo subgroup.
Kso'r	This clan is divided into the Kso'r Prong and the Kso'r Net.[3]

As noted above, each clan has a characteristic food prohibition. Tribesmen are forbidden to kill, to eat, or to take into their houses the animal with which their clan has a special connection. Actually, the affiliation is with the animal's spirit; violations of the prohibitions are believed to bring the vengeance of the spirit upon the tribesmen. It is believed that transgression of the food taboo will bring on a fit of vomiting and sickness; to ward off death, the offender must placate the spirit of the tabooed animal with a sacrifice of rice wine and a pig. Should a stranger bring a tabooed animal into a longhouse, the Jarai believe the head of the house will fall sick.

Members of each clan are said to have certain characteristics unique to their clan. For example, members of the Kso'r are supposed to be under the curse of the spirits and thus are condemned to fail in whatever they do. The Ro'chom, Ro'-o, and Ro'mah are believed able to affiliate with the spirits and thereby obtain riches and power.[4]

Although the clans are scattered throughout the Jarai area, they do not have a role in the political structure of the tribe. Political activity among the Jarai is not organized beyond the village level; thus, there is no central tribal authority to unify the Jarai clans and subgroups.

The husband is not his own master when he lives with his wife's family: he can not buy or sell property without her, and he is at the service of her relatives. This impels a Jarai father to try to get his daughters married as early as possible so that he has sons-in-law to help him in his daily work.[5]

The family is directed by a family council, whose leadership is usually held either by the eldest woman's brother or by an elder brother of one of the women living in the house. Thus, the men who marry into a family do not have power within that family. These men may, however, be members of the family council in their mother's family. Consequently, the man, although he has married into another family, still participates in the activities of the clan of his birth.[6]

Marriage

Men and women become active participants in tribal affairs only when they marry and continue the family line. Unmarried Jarai over the age of 18 may not participate in tribal affairs and are the object of disapproval. According to the Jarai, only an abnormal person does not marry. The significance of marriage is emphasized by the fact that engagements are arranged primarily by family groups. Marriage is an alliance between two families, not between two individuals.[7]

Marriage is prohibited between members of the same clan, relatives in a direct line, and members of groups with which there is a special ritual relationship.[8]

Usually the Jarai girl takes the initiative in arranging a marriage. The marriage proposal is made through a go-between selected by the girl's parents. The girl's mother gives a bracelet or *kong* to the intermediary who, holding the bracelet in his hand, asks whether the girl consents to his approaching the boy. The girl indicates her consent by not touching the bracelet. The go-between then takes the bracelet and proposes to the boy's family. If the boy's parents oppose the marriage, they say, "Ask the boy what he thinks." The boy will decline, because referring the question to him customarily indicates parental disapproval.

When consent to the marriage is given, the go-between gives the bracelet to the boy's mother, who then places it on her son's wrist to show that the two young people are engaged. The boy's father gets a jar of rice wine, kills a chicken, and offers them, together with small gifts for the girl, to the go-between who then takes the reply to the girl's family. Acceptance of these gifts makes the engagement official. Usually the go-between will be sent to make a proposal only when the girl's family is sure that the young man and his parents will agree to the marriage.

The Jarai word for engagement is *bo'kom*, combination of the prefix *bo'* and the word *kom*, which mean "interdict for the betrothed," or that the couple are tied to each other and forbidden to have sex relations with any other person.

Customarily, no couple can be engaged until one of them is at least 5 years old. An engagement requires the consent of both partners and their families. If either parent is deceased, the consent of the mother's brother is necessary. An adopted child must have the consent of his adopted parents. The remarriage of a widower or widow requires the consent of a member of the female kin of the deceased spouse. Formal family consent to a marriage is an absolute requirement. If the partners do not want to be engaged, their families can put great pressure on them; on the other hand, families may refuse permission for the marriage. If the couple persists, their families may repudiate them; then, being outside the family, they may marry.

An engagement may be broken by the betrothed's refusal to bring the marriage sacrifice. An engagement is officially broken by return of the bracelet to the girl's family.

Some villages in the region of Polei Tsar reportedly practice trial marriage.[9] However, the trial marriage is not considered an engagement.

About a week after the engagement, the marriage ceremony usually occurs. It involves a ritual alliance or *bo'lih trong*, a pact between the families of the bridal couple. The young couple exchange bracelets and pieces of a sacrificed chicken. At this time agreement is reached on a dowry to be paid by the bride's family to the bridegroom's family. Then the groom pays homage to the spirits of the source of water for the village. A feast completes the marriage ceremony.

To the Jarai, adultery is a serious crime. Their definition includes not only the usual extramarital relations, but also sexual relations by the survivor during the period between the spouse's death and the abandonment of the tomb. Adultery also includes sexual relations with other persons by either member of an engaged couple. If discovered, these offenders are subject to heavy fines. On the other hand, unmarried young people who are not engaged may freely indulge in sexual relations as long as they do not have them with any member of their family.

Divorce and Second Marriages

The Jarai accept three valid reasons for the dissolution of a marriage: divorce, absence, and death of a spouse. Divorce may be arranged by the repudiation of one spouse by another, by mutual consent, or for a cause. Grounds for divorce include mental or physical illness, practice of sorcery by a spouse, failure to consummate the marriage, refusal to have sexual relations, brutality, adultery, and refusal of the husband to work for his wife's family. Divorce cases are brought before the village tribunal for decision.[10]

If a married person leaves the village and is not heard from for a month, the village chief issues an announcement of the absence; 4 years after the announcement, a spouse is free to remarry.[11]

Death itself does not dissolve a marriage, for death to the Jarai is not final until the ceremony of the abandonment of the tomb has been performed.[12] A widower or widow may remarry after the abandonment of the tomb and the observation of rites prescribed by local custom for breaking off with the family of the deceased. Usually a widower or widow remarries only after the abandonment of the tomb, although a Jarai widower could, in exceptional circumstances, remarry as soon as 1 month after the wife's death. However, the marriage must have the approval of the family of the deceased wife. Justifications for early remarriage are poverty and small children. Likewise, a poor widow need not wait until her husband's tomb has been abandoned before she remarries. When a pregnant widow remarries though this is rare, her new husband will be the child's lawful father.[13]

In the southern Jarai area, the family of the deceased is obligated to find another spouse for the survivor. In the north the Jarai perform a mandatory, symbolic ceremony. A widower summons the unmarried sisters of his deceased wife to perform the *gai adro* ceremony, in which each of the unmarried sisters is asked to become his new spouse. If a sister consents, marriage follows; but if no sister consents, the widower is free to seek a spouse outside the family group of the deceased. A widow summons the unmarried brothers of her deceased husband and follows the same procedure.

Birth

Reportedly, in the past births had to take place outside of the village in the forest and on the bare ground without a mat.[14] No information is available about current birth practices.

After a child is born, someone blows into its ear. This blowing, the Jarai believe, sends the child's soul into his body.[15]

On the day after birth, the baby's eyes are rubbed with a bitter herb so that they can open to the world. The opening-of-the-eyes ceremony includes a religious sacrifice: a chicken's throat is cut and a jar of rice wine is offered to the guests. This sacrifice marks the beginning of a 7-day period during which the village is taboo to strangers and during which dancing and more sacrifices occur.[16]

During the week following his birth, the child is named in a family ceremony with little fanfare in the parents' home. The ceremony is very important to the status of the child, as he is considered to be a thing rather than a person until he is given a name. A child is given two names: the clan name and a personal name. The clan name is that of the mother's family, and the child's immediate family chooses his personal name. Names of all girls begin with an "H." Occasionally a personal name corresponds to a physical peculiarity or an event; for example, during the Japanese occupation in 1945, some children were named Jap. A very pretty child is given an uncomplimentary name such as Urine or Manure to keep the evil spirits away. A personal name is not permanent; the parents or the child himself may change the name if it seems to be unlucky.[17]

Child-Rearing Practices

The Jarai share with most mountain tribes a casual regard for child rearing. Children are allowed great freedom, with few restraints on their behavior during their early years. Their education is informal: the older members of the family teach them crafts, farming, and warfare, as well as the details of their religion, the tribal customs and laws, and the rituals of sacrifice.

Unfortunately, the three R's are seldom included in a child's education. Due to the physical isolation of the tribe, there are few schools in the tribal areas; and where there are schools, Jarai children rarely attend. Recently, however, missionaries and the Vietnamese Government have been offering greater educational opportunities in the remote areas.

The Jarai observe various tribal rites and customs for children; for instance, the Jarai once practiced infanticide—a first child was always killed. According to tribal belief this sacrifice ransomed the children born later and also paid the spirits for the debt incurred by bringing up children.[18] The Jarai also killed defective babies, twins, and unweaned babies whose mothers were dead and who had no one to nurse them.[19]

In the past, when Jarai boys were about 12, their teeth were filed down and lacquered. Filed-down, lacquered teeth were once regarded as enhancing the male's sex appeal, but in recent years this practice has been dying out, presumably as a result of Jarai contact with the French and Vietnamese. Although no religious ritual was involved, this ceremony marked the boy's passage to manhood. Usually, the boy chose the person to do the filing, often his mother's brother. The filing down of the teeth was a very painful operation. First, to protect the lower jaw and to keep the mouth open a piece of wood was inserted in the mouth. The teeth were filed with an elongated piece of basalt stone. When the filing was completed. the mouth was washed and the teeth blackened with lacquer made from a nonspiny shrub called *ana khea.* At first, the lacquer was clear and transparent, but after a few days it turned black.

For three days after the filing of the teeth, the boy could not eat red peppers and eggplant or talk to pregnant women.[20] He could, however, eat salt and rice.

Death and Burial

The Jarai have a mourning period, beginning with death and ending with the closing-of-the-tomb ceremony, during which the grave is visited daily and sacrifices are made monthly. During the

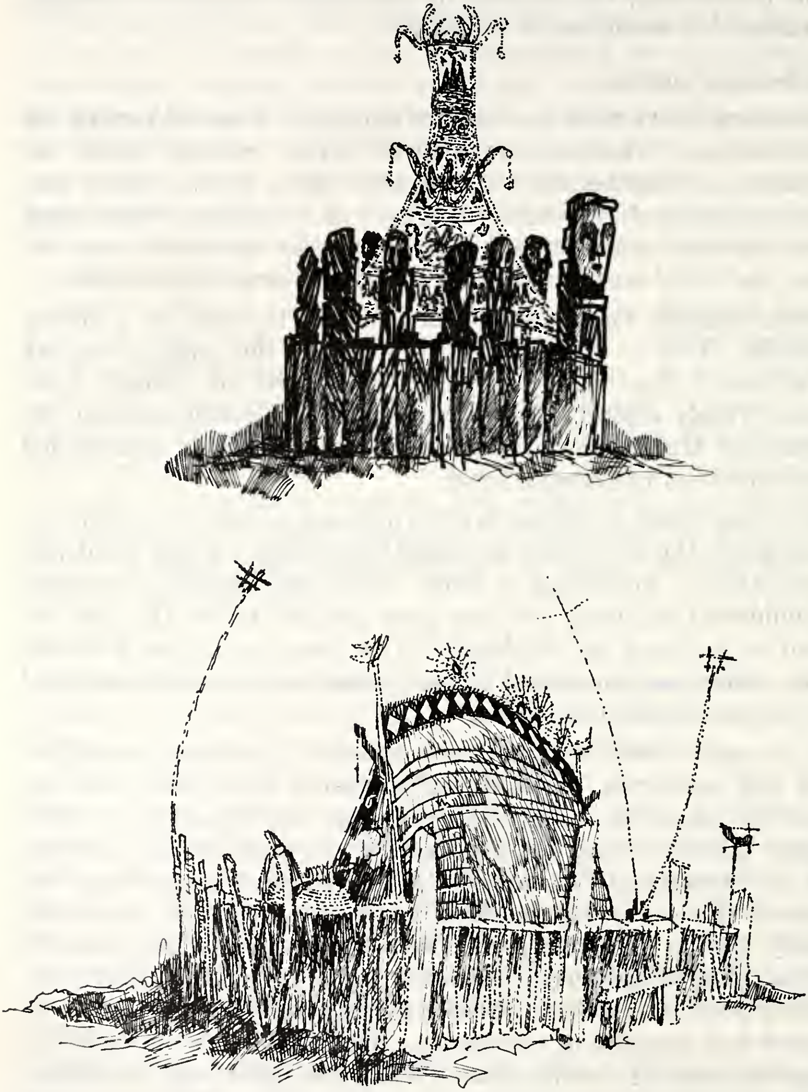
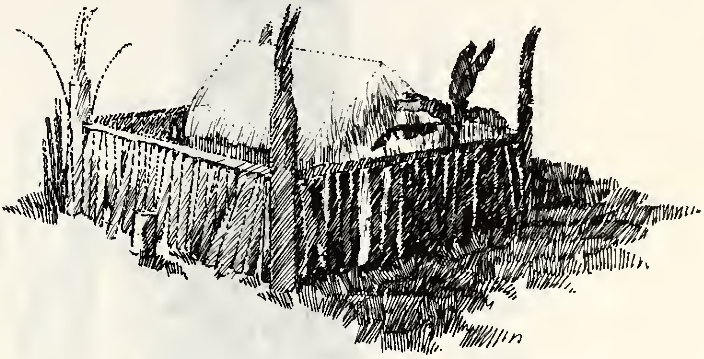


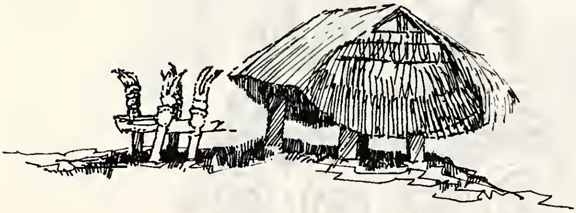
Figure 13. Jarai tombs.

mourning period, the deceased's family and the surviving spouse are obligated to perform periodic ceremonies, and the surviving spouse must maintain fidelity to the deceased. At the burial and at the abandonment of the tomb, the heirs of the deceased must sacrifice animals at the grave.

The length of the mourning period depends primarily on the wealth of the family of the deceased. For widows the mourning period is long; for a widower the mourning period is shortened. If the widower has other wives, one of them visits the grave daily. If the deceased is unmarried, his parents, brothers, or sisters must have monthly ceremonial feasts at the grave until the tomb is closed.[21]



Jarai tomb.



Detail of tomb case.

Figure 14

All Jarai tombs have certain common characteristics: On the tomb itself is a small, wall-less case of wood and bamboo. The case has a pointed roof, 10 to 15 feet high, in the form of an iron ax. There is a lattice of bamboo with ornamental motifs representing flowers and stylized persons. Sometimes there is a fresco of personages sculptured on wood placed high on the roof. Under the roof there is a wooden figurine, or doll, representing the deceased.

The tomb and its case are enclosed by a square fence measuring

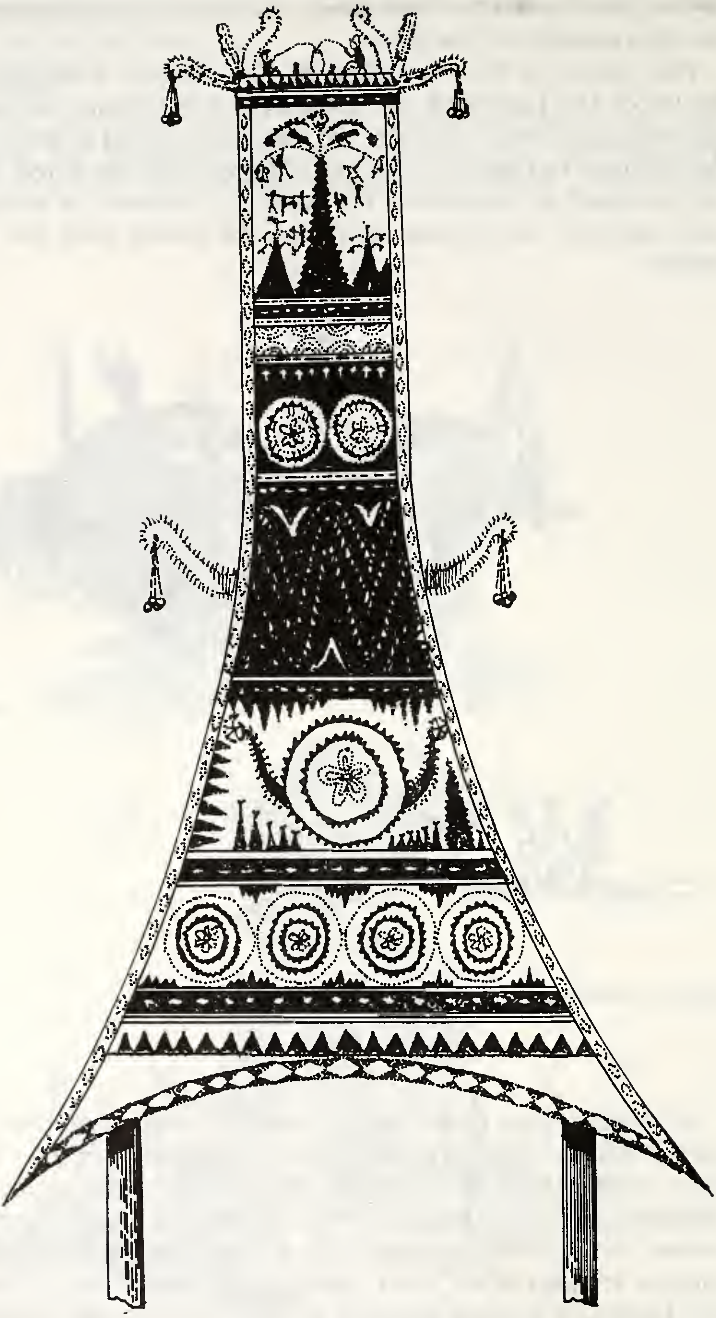


Figure 15. Roof of Jarai tomb.

about 10 to 15 feet on each side. This fence is made of joined logs, about a yard long, placed vertically around the tomb. A few of these logs are topped by figurines carved in wood. Certain of these statues, those of the mourners, for example, are persons crouched with elbows on their knees. At the four angles of the fence are carved comic faces. On one of the sides of the fence are carvings of a man and woman standing face to face.

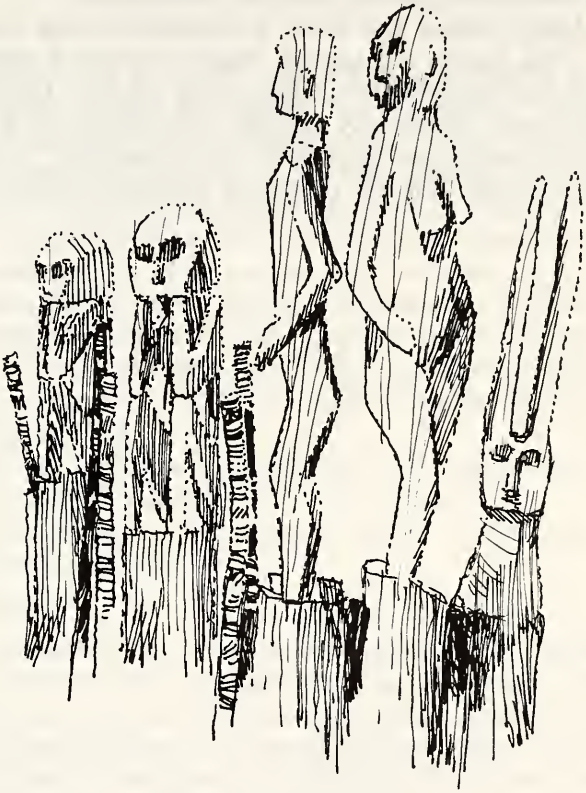


Figure 16. Jarai tomb statues.

Class Structure

There are various levels of social status in a Jarai village. Bachelors and spinsters are considered inferior to married people and have no social rank; thus, bachelors and spinsters cannot normally function as a part of the social group.

At the other end of the social scale are the elders of the village. Village elders are consulted in all matters of community interest; they are also the arbitrators of all serious disputes between village families.

Between these two extremes of the social scale are the ordinary tribesmen, whose positions are based on wealth. Rich families occupy privileged positions in the village, not because of their possessions, but because of the numerous buffalo sacrifices they make to the spirits. That a family has become rich means they are favored and protected by the spirits. The more sacrifices the rich make, the more the spirits favor them. The Jarai are seldom miserly; they believe the spirits punish those who are miserly, therefore the social prestige of those making many sacrifices is enhanced.[22]

Social mobility among the Jarai is dependent upon the will of the spirits. The spirits can bestow their favor for a time on one family and it will enjoy riches, while other families become poor. Then one day, the spirits may change their minds, and the rich family loses its wealth and associated social position. In the same manner a poor family can rise in wealth and social position.[23]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Dress

Jarai men wear loincloths, about 8 inches wide, of a cloth woven by the tribal women from locally grown fibers. Sometimes loincloths are made of imported cotton cloth and are often ornamented with beautiful polychromatic bands woven into the cloth. Colored fringes and pearls decorate the ends of some loincloths. The more elegant loincloths allow the tail to fall the length of the thigh; some loincloths are even long enough to throw over the shoulder and return to the arm. In cold weather, tribesmen wear light woven blankets. They also wear various articles of Western clothing like parts of old army uniforms and T-shirts (the latter are especially favored). At formal tribal affairs, special ceremonial clothing is worn.

(No information was available about women's dress, except that they wear a cloth wrapped around their waists.)

The Jarai smoke silver ornamented pipes and wear necklaces of linked silver spirals.[1]

Tribal Folklore

Folklore permeates all phases of tribal life.[2] Legends are recounted not only at religious ceremonies, but daily, in the evening after the day's work. Folklore characters appear in songs, are referred to in tribal law, and are used as references in conversation.

In addition to the general origin legend of the flood and the drum,* each clan has tales which account for its identity and food prohibitions. Below are some clan stories; the details, of course, vary from village to village:

One legend tells of members of the Ro'mah clan who fell into the water, and how they were sustained while in the water by nourishment from eels. Consequently, the Ro'mah do not eat eels. Another story tells of Ro'mah fishermen who used the technique of poisoning the water to catch fish. When they ate these fish, their skin turned to leather, and they became elephants; since then the Ro'mah have not eaten elephants.

Once two Ro'chom sisters washed a fishing net and put it out to dry. During the night the net disappeared; the older sister accused the younger of having stolen it. A fight ensued in which the older sister killed the younger one. Later when a cow was killed, the stolen net was found inside its carcass. Since then the Ro'chom have not eaten the flesh of cows because a cow caused the death of one of their people.

---

* See "Legendary History," p. 261.

An ancestor of the Siu clan found an iguana skin in his house and a kite and a toucan (birds) perched on his house—this was a very rare occurrence. These events were considered to be the manifestations of the sympathy of the spirits for these animals and of the animals' desire to contract an alliance with that family.

Two sisters from the Ro'hlan clan once lived together. One day the oldest sister trapped a toad and cooked it for her dinner; while she was away, the younger sister ate the cooked toad. When the older sister returned, the younger one confessed her deed and swore that neither she nor her descendants would ever again eat toads.

Another Ro'hlan tale concerns a clan ancestor who had a valuable jar in which a grackle and a lizard lived; to the tribespeople this meant that the spirits of the grackle and lizard wanted to have a special connection with the clan.

Once, when a Ko'pa clan ancestor was near a river, she saw a gourd full of peppers and rice and a gourd of rice wine which she consumed. A little later some kinsmen came by the river, saw a lizard, and killed it. Upon opening the lizard, the kinsmen found inside it all the things the woman had eaten; they realized that the woman had been transformed into a lizard. Since then, the Ko'pa do not trap or kill lizards for fear of injuring their ancestor.

Once, among the Ro'-o, the people saw a toad sitting next to a newborn baby girl. The baby's father threw the toad into the river, but it came back, to be thrown into the river a total of seven times. The girl's family then realized that the spirit of the toad wanted to form an affiliation with their clan.

In the Kso'r clan, an ancestor once discovered the scales of a dragon in the rice storehouse. She asked a sorcerer what this meant, and he replied that the reptiles (according to an oral tradition all reptiles are descended from dragons) wanted to make an agreement with her clan and to help them. Therefore, the Kso'r do not trap and kill any reptiles.

A list of the Jarai clans and their food taboos is below.

Ro'mah	Eels and elephants.
Ro'chom	Domestic and wild cattle.
Siu	Iguanas, toucans, and kites.
Ro'hlan	Toads, lizards, and grackles.
Ko'pa	Monitor lizards.
Ro'-o	Toads.
Kso'r	Reptiles.

Some variations of these taboos have been noted in different regions of the Jarai area; for example, the species of reptiles taboo for the Kso'r varies from region to region and even from village to village.[3]

Folk Beliefs

The Jarai are afraid to cut their hair; they believe that the soul of a man dwells especially in his head and that to cut a man's hair is to take away his soul. Sight of the man's hair enables the soul to recognize its home when it returns from its nocturnal wanderings during dreams. However, if the hair is cut and buried, the soul will search for it and, finding it buried, will think "my subordinate (body) is dead." This will cause the soul to flee to the realm of the spirits. Deprived of its vital principal, the body will then be obliged to die.[4]

A grotesque figure of straw and bamboo, complete with bow and arrow, is placed on the path near Jarai village entrances to ward off harmful spirits that may have brought death to the villagers. The Jarai reportedly place great faith in the power of this figure to guard the village against hostile spirits.[5]

A Jarai guide warned a traveler not to touch the big liana plant called ana khea which bears fruit like the Indian horse chestnut, because it caused a weakness in the knees. The Jarai believe the plant is the home of a spirit which steals the soul of those who touch it.[6]

A closed door and branches tied to a wooden post before a Jarai house indicate the house is taboo.[7]

An epidemic in a village results in a 7-day taboo which prevents strangers from entering the village. The following sign is erected as a warning: The heads of monkeys, the shackles of elephants, and spears are suspended at the entrance gate of the contaminated village; all indicate a dangerous sickness. If the epidemic becomes widespread, the entrance gate, as well as all paths leading to the village, are closed by numerous tangled branches.[8]

A missionary who once tried to tie his horse to a post supporting a floor on which rice was ground was forbidden to do so by the angry Jarai proprietor who said the threshing floor was kom—taboo. The Jarai believe they cannot nourish their horses and other animals without sacrificing one of them to the spirits.[9]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The Jarai religion is based on a multitude of spirits—*yang*—who created the earth and rule it. The spirits are masters of the world, as well as guardians of society and religion. Any action contrary to social or religious tradition is considered an attack upon the spirits and requires the tribesmen to make amends to the spirits in order to escape punishment. The belief that the spirits can interfere in everything—economics, customs, morals, and social actions—dominates every facet of Jarai life; the tribesmen must consult these spirits through divination before taking any action.

Principal Deities

The Jarai believe that the spirits or yang govern the movement of the entire cosmos. They control the rhythm of the seasons, the movement of the stars, rainfall, the fertility of the soil, the growth of the plants, riches and poverty, and the multiplication of herds. Particular spirits have importance for the entire Jarai tribe, while other spirits have only local or regional importance; some spirits—such as the spirit of a special rock—may be worshipped in only one village. The good spirits, fewer in number than the bad spirits, receive special attention from the Jarai. Household spirits, such as the spirits of the hearth and the broom, are accorded special treatment. There are two types of evil spirits: those which cause epidemics, accidents, and death among animals and plants and those which punish men for acts contrary to the established customs of the tribe. These latter spirits are responsible for temporary illnesses and nonfatal accidents. Again, regional variations determine the significance and manifestations of the various spirits: a spirit believed in one area to punish with drought might in another area punish with rain.[1]

Principal Religious Ceremonies

Feasts and religious ceremonies are one and the same for the Jarai. One such holiday, called Do Buy, occurs in August to celebrate the maturation of the rice. There are also two harvest feasts—Dong Pua in November and Tyep Bong in December—that have religious significance as well as being festive occasions. The

Jarai have a long spring festival called Arap which is celebrated throughout February and March: numerous feasts and ceremonies take place during this period; some of them honor ancestors, and others are associated with clearing the land and planting the rice.

The Jarai also have ceremonial feasts on many other occasions: a feast is always associated with marriage ceremonies, with departure for war, with return from war with prisoners, and with the inauguration of a communal house. Buffalo sacrifices *(mut bong pao)* and feasts of the tomb *(po thi)* also take place; but the reasons for them, and the times of the year in which they are celebrated, vary from region to region.

Religious Rituals

Jarai religious rituals involve prayers, sacrifices, and drinking. A religious practitioner presides over ceremonies large (sacrifice of a buffalo) and small (sacrifice of a chicken). He offers prayers to the spirits to which the ceremony is directed, asking for their attention and for action; for example, to make the rice crop grow or to end a plague. Then an animal is ceremonially killed; in the case of a buffalo sacrifice, a long ceremony is involved; a short ceremony, in the case of a chicken. During the ceremony, one or more jars of rice wine are drunk, and the sacrificed animal is eaten by the celebrants.

A technique of divination designed to ascertain the desires of the spirits and the exact sacrifices required for ceremonies is called Topa Gai. In the Topa Gai ritual, a special religious practitioner questions the spirit of the stick (Yang Gie) by holding a stick parallel to his outstretched arm. Replies from Yang Gie are derived from the motion of the muscles of the extended arm: the Jarai believe the distances the muscles, in contracting, move away from the stick indicate the spirit's answers. Only married men may question the spirits with this technique, which is also used to select longhouse sites, interpret dreams, determine the cause of sickness, and choose land for cultivation.[2]

Religious Practitioners

Rarely do the Jarai recognize political authority beyond that of the elders or headman of their own village, although occasionally they will respect a rich and powerful individual as the leader of several villages. Frequently, however, a sorcerer is the most powerful single individual in a Jarai village—further evidence of the influence of religion and spirits in the everyday life of the tribesmen. Even the village headman owes his position partially to his influence with the spirits.[3]

Missionary Contact

French Catholic missionaries began to work among the Jarai in the 19th century. The Christian and Missionary Alliance opened its first mission in Jarai territory in 1947. By January of 1961, the records of the Alliance showed some five hundred Jarai converts, four trained Jarai pastors, and a translation into Jarai of the New Testament and three books of the Old Testament.[4]

A major obstacle to conversion of the Jarai to the Christian faith is the intolerance of other tribesmen toward the convert, his family, or his village. The Jarai believe the refusal of the convert to join in the traditional ceremonies and sacrifices incurs the anger of the spirits and will bring disaster for both the convert and his village.

Medical work by the missionaries, especially among the lepers, has been successful and has resulted in many conversions.[5]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Jarai economy is based on agriculture. Rice, the principal crop is cultivated on lands cleared by the slash-and-burn technique and depends solely on rainfall for irrigation.[1] Briefly, this technique involves cutting down, during the winter months, all vegetation in the new area and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as fertilizer which permits crops for 3 to 4 years. When the fields no longer support a crop, the village moves to a new area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle, and repeats the slash-and-burn clearing process in the new area. The Jarai are reported to practice the slash-and-burn cultivation so recklessly that large barren areas have resulted.

In the areas around Pleiku, Plei Kly, and Cheo Reo, the Jarai also cultivate permanent fields. These fields are kept clear of brush, allowed to remain fallow for 2 years or more, and then replanted.

More than seven varieties of rice are cultivated, and the Jarai also raise squash, beans, corn, bananas, papayas, and tobacco.[2] The Jarai raise buffaloes, oxen, horses, pigs, and poultry. These animals are raised principally for use in religious sacrifices, although they are eaten during the ceremonies, thereby supplementing the Jarai diet.[3]

Predominant Occupations

In addition to tasks associated with farming and the raising of animals, Jarai men make everything from baskets to longhouses from wood and bamboo. Some work is also done in iron. Jarai women weave cloth, from which they make clothing and blankets, in addition to performing tasks in the house and the fields. However, since World War II, Jarai weaving has declined, as the tribe is using more and more imported cloth and clothing.[4]

In the town of Cheo Reo, the Jarai operate shops which sell articles of clothing and a Vietnamese alcoholic beverage, *choum*. In larger villages, some tribesmen are salesmen for Vietnamese and Chinese merchants; other Jarai are peddlers, working on their own or as distributors for Vietnamese and Chinese merchants.

Trade

The Jarai trade, on a small scale, with neighboring groups. They trade food—pineapples, bananas, and rice—and other items such as baskets, for salt which they prize highly for storing meat in great jars.[5] Salt is also considered an excellent gift. The Jarai also engage in some intertribal trade in buffaloes, oxen, and gongs.[6]

Property System

Although no leases or titles exist on paper, the Jarai have very strong concepts of ownership. Ownership of the land is vested in individuals and families rather than in villages and is, with all other real property, in the hands of the female members of a Jarai family. Real property is usually inherited by daughters, although sons may receive small shares if the inheritance is large. Personal property is owned by individuals, both male and female. The payment for military service received by many Jarai tribesmen has created a new factor in the traditional family economic picture, and the property system may have changed somewhat.[7]

Distribution of Wealth

Wealth among the Jarai is reported by one source to be evenly distributed, as villagers share equally in everything.[8] Another report notes the presence of both rich and poor in Jarai villages, with the rich displaying their wealth by making expensive buffalo sacrifices.[9]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The Jarai have never achieved political unity on a tribal level. Allegiance is normally given only to the village, led by a headman and a council of elders; occasionally strong leaders win the respect of several villages in a local area. Although temporary alliances between villages exist, they are designed only to insure that the villages will not attack one another.

The village is the basic political unit among the Jarai. The village political system consists of a headman and a council of elders. The council of elders functions as an advisory body to the headman and serves as a tribunal for resolving disputes.[1]

In the past, the Jarai gave allegiance to two kings; the King of Fire—Sadet of Fire—in the Pleiku area and the King of Water—Sadet of Water—in the Cheo Reo area. According to the legendary history of the Jarai, the Sadets were powerful rulers; however, factual sources indicate their power was more religious than political.

Traditionally, Jarai village headmen and elders were selected by the villagers themselves. Usually the elders are persons the villagers regard as rich, influential, or as having the favor of (and influence with) the spirits. In short, anyone who has above average respect from the villagers will gravitate, through his own efforts or through good fortune, toward membership on the council of elders.

The village headman is usually chosen by the village elders from among themselves. Recently, the Vietnamese Government has been choosing Jarai village headmen. These Government-appointed headmen are technically responsible to the Government rather than to the villagers and are supposed to function as the representative of the Government on the local level. However, the duties of the appointed headman often overlap with those of the headman selected by the villagers themselves. This situation has greatly complicated the village political system, and there is often conflict between the two headmen.[2]

The village headman's authority varies. Occasionally his power may be successfully disputed by the Government-appointed headman, or a well-known sorcerer may emerge to challenge his leadership. It is also possible for a well-known headman to win the respect of a number of villages; in such a case, the headman may become influential in the political activities of several villages. Thus, the authority and influence of the headman depends upon the man, his accomplishments or good fortune, and the respect of the villagers.

The most effective restraint on the headman's authority is his relationship with the villagers. If he loses their respect, the headman will be ignored—as is often the case with Government appointees. The villagers will then look to someone else for guidance and advice. This change may occur overnight or over a long period of time; the cause may stem from some event interpreted by the villagers as an unfavorable sign from the spirits or from a series of mistakes by the headman.[3]

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapprochement between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government has supported a policy of permitting the Jarai and other tribes to be separate administrative entities. Now, however, the Government of the Republic in Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

Several factors make it difficult to integrate the Jarai into the national Vietnamese society. First, the Jarai sense of identity seldom goes beyond the village level. The Jarai have been isolated in the highlands for centuries, partly out of personal preference and partly as a result of fears of outsiders and strangers. Consequently, any sense of identity with or participation in the Republic of Vietnam is a rare exception among the tribesmen.

Legal System

Prior to the arrival of the French, the Jarai had numerous unwritten tribal laws expressed in terms of taboos and sanctions, known and respected by all members of society. Nearly all aspects of tribal, village, family, and individual behavior were covered in a well-defined moral order with clearly specified retributions and punishments for violations. Mediation of disputes and imposition of punishment for violations of customs are the concern of the family and village. Jarai laws were codified by the French administrators and scholars and are in the form of a collection of rhythmic poems.[4]

Traditionally, disputes have been settled by the elders of the village who would listen to both parties before rendering a decision. The verdict usually involves a fine—the guilty are required to pay a fine of property or livestock to the injured party or sacrifice pigs, chickens, or buffaloes to the spirits. The disputants are free to accept or reject the verdict.[5] Capital punishment is almost unknown among the Jarai and is restricted to outsiders or to people considered to be "soul eaters"—persons accused of "eating" the soul of another, thereby causing the victim misfortune. The ultimate punishment is generally banishment from the village, which may be imposed by the village or by the guilty person himself. In the latter case, a Jarai who believes he has been unduly wronged or unjustly treated by the council and who is opposed to the majority of the villagers has no choice but to leave the village.[6]

Reportedly, the settlement of disputes among the Jarai on the village level occasionally become a complex and an almost comical series of events. Personal fights or differences between individuals continue for a long time, eventually becoming family feuds. When the feud becomes bothersome for the entire village, the village council sits down to discuss the problem with the two families or the disputants to arbitrate or resolve the issue. Frequently the decision requires the payment of buffaloes or jars of rice wine. The consumption of rice wine sometimes begins a chain reaction of disputes and fines,[7] a series of events ceasing only when drunkenness ends the cycle.

The French brought a formalized legal system into the Jarai area. French-appointed judges, selected from the tribe, listened to both sides of a dispute, referred to the appropriate law, and rendered decision. Cases were usually resolved through discussions between the two parties and the judge. Generally the cases handled by the French courts were those that could not be resolved on a village level by the council of elders.[8]

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This effort was part of the Vietnamese policy to politically integrate the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[9]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[10] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be reached, the case may be referred to a higher court.[11]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[12]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[13]

Relations with Neighboring Tribes

Present relations between the Jarai and other tribes are limited to commercial contacts with the Rhade and Bahnar. However, the Bahnar have influenced the cultural habits of the Jarai groups in the regions bordering the Bahnar territory. The Jarai envy and respect the more advanced Rhade but generally regard the Bahnar with suspicion, partially because of the historical enmity between the two tribes.* [14]

Subversive Influences

Their isolation and marginal subsistence make the Jarai susceptible to the subversive activities of the Viet Cong. With the end of the Indochina War, many Jarai left their villages for North Vietnam. Some have since returned and are a possible source of dissension within the tribe. These Jarai are often accompanied by North Vietnamese who speak the Jarai language.

The primary objectives of the subversive elements is to win allegiance of the Jarai and to turn the Jarai into an active, hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

The Viet Cong methods of subversion vary from simple, educational lectures to the most brutal terrorization. The Viet Cong agents try to win Jarai confidence, then they slowly indoctrinate the tribesmen with hostility towards the Vietnamese Government. If the tribesmen are willing, they are encouraged to train for participation in military or supporting roles in hostile action against Government forces.

---

* See "Factual History," p. 261.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Word-of-mouth communication is the principal means of disseminating information in Jarai villages. The village elders are the most influential people in a Jarai village and are the key communicators. Dealings should be with these community leaders, and they could be informed or indoctrinated with desired information. These leaders could possibly be reached through provincial leaders.

Radios are rare in the tribal areas; but an aid program has been reported distributing Sony radios and loudspeakers to each village, thus making broadcasts from Saigon and provincial radio stations available to the tribesmen.

The Jarai like movies, and they have been receptive to films about malaria prevention; hence, it is very likely that movies are an important means of communication.[1]

Since the majority of the Jarai are illiterate, written information has little meaning for them. If directed to the few Jarai who can read, written messages might be effective as the literate tribesman could be expected to relay the information to their illiterate neighbors. It is reported that pictures are generally more effective than written messages.[2]

Storytellers, minstrels, and criers have been used effectively to convey messages to Jarai tribesmen from the Vietnamese Government. This approach is particularly useful when it makes use of Jarai folklore and legends.[3]

Consideration should be given to the possibilities of using Jarai music making in information programs, as it is an integral part of tribal life. The Jarai enjoy music at home, frequently gathering together for an evening of music making. Thus, music is a useful means to call people together and to attract their attention for an information session.[4]

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Jarai religious, social, and cultural traditions. All initial contacts should be made only with the tribal elders because of the Jarai political structure. It is also essential that the Jarai be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to result, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village oriented, the Jarai respond favorably to ideas for change when they are presented in terms of community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasizing ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained; the Jarai resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Jarai encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry

   - a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
   - b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   - c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   - d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farm lands.
   - e. Insect and rodent control.
   - f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.

2. Transportation and communication
   - a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   - b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   - c. Construction of motion picture facilities.
   - d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.

3. Health and sanitation
   - a. Improve village sanitation.
   - b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
   - c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   - d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   - e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.

4. Education
   - a. Provide basic literacy training.
   - b. Provide basic citizenship education.
   - c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Jarai can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen may be used as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Jarai can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership, they can be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat unit.

Hostile Activity Toward the Jarai and Tribal Reaction

When the psychological pressures or conversion to subversive activities fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. The tribesmen have been openly murdered, whole villages intimidated, food and money exacted as tribute, tribesmen forced to labor in the jungle to build roads and traps, tribesmen used as beasts of burden to carry supplies, and occasionally villages have been attacked and destroyed completely.[1]

Frequently, the Jarai yield and cooperate with the Viet Cong. The isolated Jarai do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong, and need Government training and support. Jarai villages have no able organization for defense except those equipped, trained and organized by the Government. Jarai villages with adequate training and support will defend themselves and will occasionally initiate aggressive action against the Viet Cong.

The inclination of the Jarai to fight aggressively is one that must be developed and supported with modern weapons and training. The Jarai defend themselves vigorously when they, their families, or their villages are threatened and when they have adequate resources and a chance for success.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

In the past, the Jarai relied upon crossbows, spears, lances, swords, and knives and were very skillful in their use. Recently, they have received training in the use of modern weapons. Their relatively small stature limits the weapons the Jarai can use; but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachine gun, and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning Automatic Rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled and quickly reassembled.

The Jarai pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Jarai can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Jarai are less proficient with sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, than with hand weapons. They find it difficult to absorb the more abstract and technical aspects, such as timing trajectories, of such weapons.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Jarai can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Jarai learn techniques and procedures most readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations; such an approach is too abstract for them.

Some Jarai are veterans of service with the French and are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

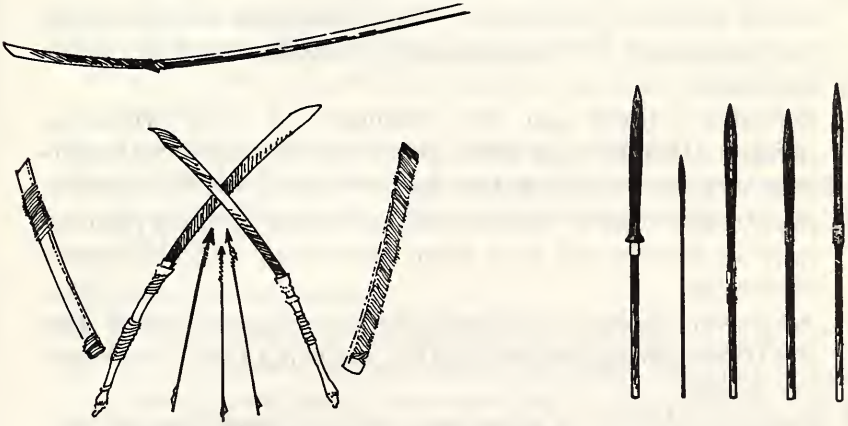


Figure 17. Jarai swords, scabbards, crossbow arrows, and spears.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE JARAI

Every action of the Jarai tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Jarai may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Jarai are listed below.

Official Activity

1. Initial contact with a Jarai village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village headman and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Jarai. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Jarai tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Items should not be given away without some form of payment. Something useful to the village, i.e., a drainage ditch in return for the loan of a set of shovels, should be obtained.
7. No immediate, important decision should be asked of a Jarai. An opportunity for family consultation should always be provided; if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
8. Tribal elders and the village headman should also receive credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts

should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Jarai should be treated with respect and courtesy. It is better to speak in a quiet voice than in a loud one because the Jarai consider a quiet voice more respectful and dignified.
2. The term moi should not be used because it means savage, and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel can refuse a Jarai offer of food or drink if consistency and impartiality are shown. However, once involved in a religious ceremony, one should eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift or invitation to a ceremony or to enter a Jarai house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the Jarai.
5. Outsiders must request permission to attend a Jarai ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Jarai house, unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not photograph the tribesmen until sure such action will not offend them or until permission has been given.
8. Outsiders should not get involved with Jarai women.
9. Generally, Jarai are eager to learn; however, teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not touch or otherwise tamper with Jarai tombs.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
3. As soon as possible identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Jarai believe sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.

4. Do not mock Jarai religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Jarai life.
5. Do not kill or trap the animals taboo to the clan with which you are staying. The taboos have deep religious significance, and violation requires sacrifices. Study the animal taboos for each clan given in the section on taboos.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Jarai property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. When trading with the Jarai, outsiders should always allow time for family conferences, as the individual Jarai is obliged, by tradition, to consult his family before selling anything.
3. Difficult, rigorous work should be done early in the morning, from dawn to 10:30 or 11:00 a.m. A nap during the middle of the day is customary, and light work is done in the afternoon.
4. Learn simple phrases in the Jarai language. A desire to learn and speak their language makes a favorable impression on the Jarai.
5. The Jarai prefer to live in longhouses with their entire extended family. Whenever possible, housing projects should take this preference into consideration. The style of the house should not be changed; it is an integral part of Jarai environment.

Health and Welfare

1. The Jarai are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Jarai areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and should have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.
3. In remote Jarai villages, it might be useful for medical people to work with the Jarai shaman or sorcerer. Frequently, the shaman welcomes cooperation, because his reputation improves as his healing average "rises."
4. Medical personnel must be discreet in treating tribal women, as they are extremely shy and modest.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. M. H. Besnard, "Les Populations moi du Darlac," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, VII (1907), p. 61; Pierre-Bernard Lafont, *Toloi Djuat: Coutumier de la tribu jarai* (Paris: l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1963), p. 11.
2. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
3. *Ibid.*
4. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 19–21.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–88.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), pp. 150, 245.
2. Rev. Charles E. Long, Interview (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, June 5, 1964). [Mennonite missionary.]
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Capt. Corns, Returnee Interview (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964).
7. Long, *op. cit.*
8. Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), p. 47.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–73.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
12. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 156; Henri Maître, *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909), pp. 31–32; Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), p. 1093.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964), p. 89.
2. Corns, *op. cit.*
3. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
4. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
5. Corns, *op. cit.*
6. Bourotte, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

7. Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, July 1965 [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]
8. Long, *op. cit.*
9. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–57.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1086.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 153–56.
5. A. Maurice, and G. Proux, "L'Âme du riz," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, Special Issue, XXIX (1954), p. 83; Dam Bo, *op. cit.*; p. 1086.
6. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 160; and Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1086–87.
7. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 160–169; and LeBar, *op. cit.*, p. 250.
8. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–62.
9. Paul P. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum* (Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952), pp. 338–39.
10. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 180–87.
11. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*
12. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 162–63.
13. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*
14. Henri Maspéro, "Moeurs et coutumes des populations sauvages," in Georges Maspéro (ed.), *Un Empire colonial français: L'Indochine* (Paris: G. Van Oest, 1929), p. 254.
15. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1088.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
18. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
19. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, pp. 232–33.
20. A. Maurice, "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), pp. 135, 137–38.
21. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, pp. 367–68.
22. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–57.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Norman Lewis, *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), p. 139.
2. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
3. *Ibid.*
4. R. P. J. E. Kemlin, "Au Pays jarai," *Missions Catholiques* XXXIX (1909), p. 246.
5. Evelyn Mangham, "Superstitions," *Jungle Frontiers*, XI (Summer 1960), p. 10.
6. Kemlin, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
8. Bernard Jouin, "Histoire légendaire du Sadet du Feu," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), pp. 79–80.
9. Kemlin, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

VI. RELIGION

1. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–59.
2. J. Kerrest, "La Consultation du bâton (chez les Moi rhade et jarai)," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), pp. 215-17.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIV (Winter 1961), p. 13.
5. Long, *op. cit.*

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
2. Long, *op. cit.*
3. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Long, *op. cit.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-59.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157; Long, *op. cit.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Lafont, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 123–25.
6. Long, *op. cit.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 3.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*; and Lafont, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Long, *op. cit.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Long, *op. cit.*

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE JARAI

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ade, Mildred. "The Leprosarium: Not Disrupted," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVII (Summer 1963), 1.

Bertrand, Gabrielle. *Le Peuple de la jungle.* Paris: Société Commerciale d'Édition et de Libraire-Édition "Je Sers," 1952.

de Berval, René. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* 1950, 49–50, 939–1203.

Besnard, M. H. "Les Populations moi du Darlac," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* VII (1907), 61–86.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Burchett, Wilfred G. *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1963.

Condominas, Georges. "Observations sociologiques sur deux chants épiques rhades," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLVII (1953), 555–66.

Corns, Capt. Returnee Interview. Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Ezzaoui, J. "Une Version de la légende de deux Sadets," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* III (1940), 169–74.

Farinaud, M. E. "La Répartition des groupes sanguins chez les Bahnares, les Djarais, et les Sedangs: Populations primitives de l'Indochine méridionale," *Comptes Rendus des Séances et Mémoires de la Société de Biologie et de ses Filiales et Associées,* CXXXI (1939), 1236–38.

Guilleminet, Paul P. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum.* Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. "Comments on Y Bham's Address — 15 March 1965." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, March 24, 1965.

Jouin, Bernard. *La Mort et la tombe: L'Abandon de la tombe.* Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1949.

———. "Histoire légendaire du Sadet du Feu," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXVI (1951), 73–84.

Kemlin, R. P. J. E. "Au Pays jarai," *Missions Catholiques,* XXXIX (1909), 225–27; 238–39; 246–48.

Kerrest, J. "La Consultation du bâton (chez les Moi rhade et jarai)," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 215–23.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. July 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. *Toloi Djuat: Coutumier de la tribu jarai.* Paris: l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1963.

Landes, A. "Légende djarai sur l'origine du sabre sacré par le roi du feu," *Revue Indochinoise* (1904), 336–69.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Lewis, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

Long, Rev. Charles E. "The Jarai," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), 4–5.

———. Interview. Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, June 5, 1964. [Mennonite missionary.]

Maître, Henri. *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois.* Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909.

Mallert, Louis. *Les Groupes ethniques de l'Indochine française.* Saigon: Publications de la Société des Études Indochinoises, 1937.

Mangham, Evelyn. "Superstitions," *Jungle Frontiers,* XI (Summer 1960), 10.

Maspéro, Henri. "Moeurs et coutumes des populations sauvages," Edited by Georges Maspéro. *Un Empire colonial français: L'Indochine.* Paris: G. Van Oest, 1929.

Maurice, A. "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 135–39.

Maurice, A., and Proux, G. "L'Âme du riz," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* Special Issue,, XXIX (1954), 5–134.

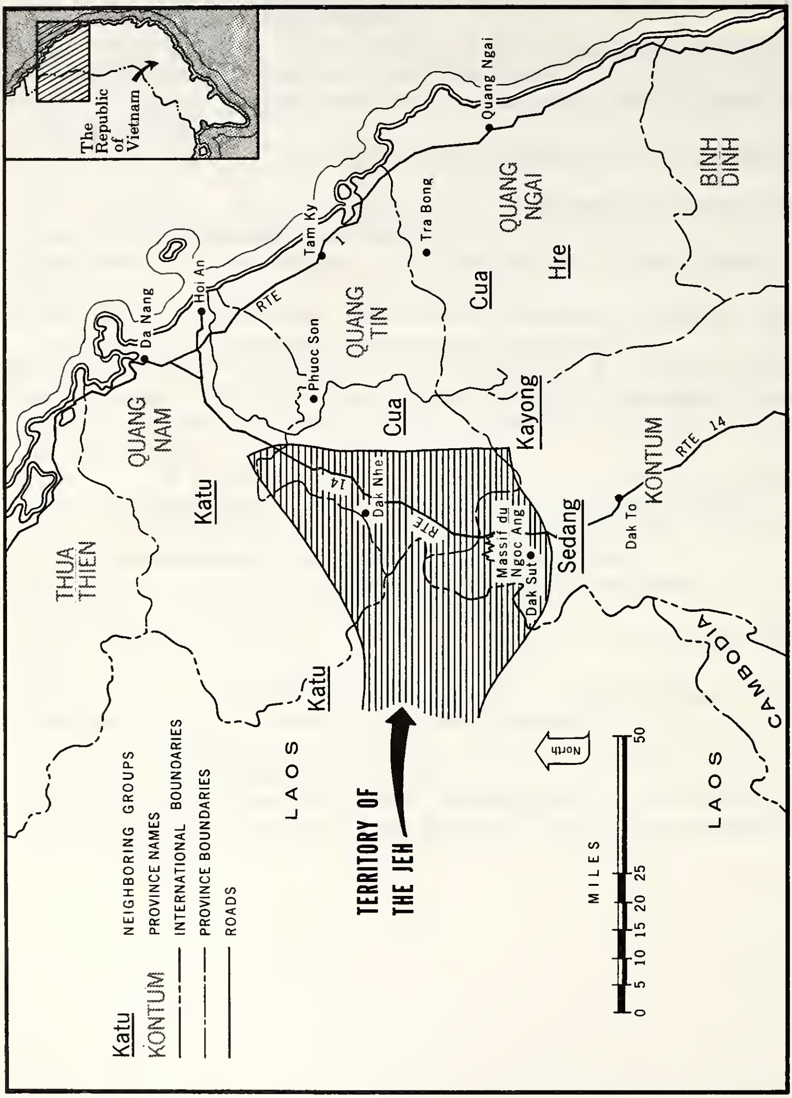
Morechand, Guy. "Folklore musical jarai et bahnar," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXVI (1951), 357–83.

Phillips, Richard. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XIV (Winter 1961), 13.

Roux (Cdt.). "Les Tombeaux chez les Moi jarai," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XXIX (1929), 346–48.

Trinquet, C. "Notes sur la tribu des Djarai, partie Sud-Ouest," *Revue Indochinoise* (December 1906), 1903–31.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964.


The Republic of Vietnam
THUA THIEN
QUANG NAM
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGAI
BINH DINH
KONTUM
LAOS
CAMBODIA
Katu
Cua
Hre
Kayong
Sedang
Da Nang
Hoi An
Tam Ky
Quang Ngai
Tra Bong
Phuoc Son
Dak Nhe
Massif du Ngoc Ang
Dak Sut
Dak To
RTE 1
RTE 14
TERRITORY OF THE JEH
North
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
Katu NEIGHBORING GROUPS
KONTUM PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS

The Jeh

CHAPTER 8. THE JEH

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Regarded as one of the most isolated and primitive of the Montagnard tribal groups of the Republic of Vietnam, the Jeh live in the rugged, mountainous Laos-Vietnam border region. The Jeh are of Mon-Khmer ethnic and linguistic stock, as are the nearby Katu and Sedang.

Jeh society is patriarchal and their autonomous villages constitute the group's highest level of social and political organization. The Jeh economy is based on the slash-and-burn cultivation of dry rice.

Name and Size of Group

The exact number of the Jeh (or Die, as they are often called) is not recorded. Recent estimates vary from 7,000 to 18,000.[1] In 1964 an American missionary estimated that the Jeh numbered approximately 15,000 persons.[2]

Location and Terrain Analysis

The Jeh live in the mountainous region along the Se Kemane, Poko, and Dak Mi Rivers in southern Quang Nam, western Quang Tin, and northwestern Kontum Provinces. Some Jeh also live across the border in Laos.[3] Roughly, the Jeh may be placed within the region bounded on the north by Dak Nhe; on the east by Phuoc Son; on the south by Dak Sut; and on the west in Laos by the eastern edge of the Bolovens Plateau. The Sedang inhabit the area to the south of the Jeh, the Katu are located to the north, and the Cua are found to the east.[4]

The region is covered with monsoon and primary rain forests. The monsoon forest, along the lower elevations near watercourses, is relatively easy to penetrate. During the dry winter season, the monsoon forest turns brown and many of the trees lose their leaves. During the summer rainy season travel is difficult because of the quagmires produced by flooding.[5]

Primary rain forest covers the more inaccessible regions (usually the highest elevations). Here the trees, with an average height of 75 to 90 feet, form a continuous canopy. Below this canopy are smaller trees 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this forest; hence, there is little ground growth. During the dry season, this forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.[6]

Areas of secondary rain forest develop after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated. Here the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.[7] There are few roads, trails, or navigable waterways in the Jeh area, and travel is difficult. Travel is especially inhibited during the rainy season from April to mid-September.[8]

The climate of the Jeh area is influenced by two monsoon winds, one from the southwest in the summer (April to mid-September) and the other from the northeast in the winter (mid-September to March). Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the summer monsoons, which bring up to 150 inches of rain yearly and create local floods. Temperatures in the Jeh region are as much as 15 degrees lower than in the coastal lowland regions.[9]

The Jeh area is crossed by Vietnam's National Route 14, a hard-surfaced, militarily important communication route running north from Kontum through Dak To, Dak Sut, Dak Gle, turning east at Thuong Duc to reach the coast at Hoi An.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: the Malayo-Polynesian and the Mon-Khmer. In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Jeh belong to the Mon-Khmer grouping. Indochina has been a migratory corridor from time immemorial, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated through Indochina.[1] The Jeh are descendents of these ancient migrants and are related to the Sedang, Katu, Bahnar, and M'nong, in terms of customs, language, and agricultural techniques.[2]

Language

Reportedly there are three or four Jeh dialects, all of which fall within the Bahnaric grouping of the Mon-Khmer language family. The Jeh dialects are understood by some Sedang and by some ethnic Vietnamese; some Jeh, in turn, can speak Sedang and Vietnamese. There are indications that a few Jeh can speak other tribal languages. Jeh knowledge of other languages has been acquired through trading contacts, limited education in Government and missionary schools, and military service with either the French or the Vietnamese.[3]

The Jeh currently have no written language, although it is reported that a linguist in the area near Dak Sut has been developing one.[4] At present the only way to learn the Jeh dialects is to live among the people or to establish contact with one of the limited number of Jeh tribesmen who have left their villages.

Legendary History

Legends about the origins of the tribes, the spirits, and the world are part of the large oral tradition of the Jeh. Passed down by word of mouth—usually in verse form to prevent distortion—these tales of legendary heroes, anecdotes about tribal members, proverbs, and traditional tribal laws are frequently chanted in the

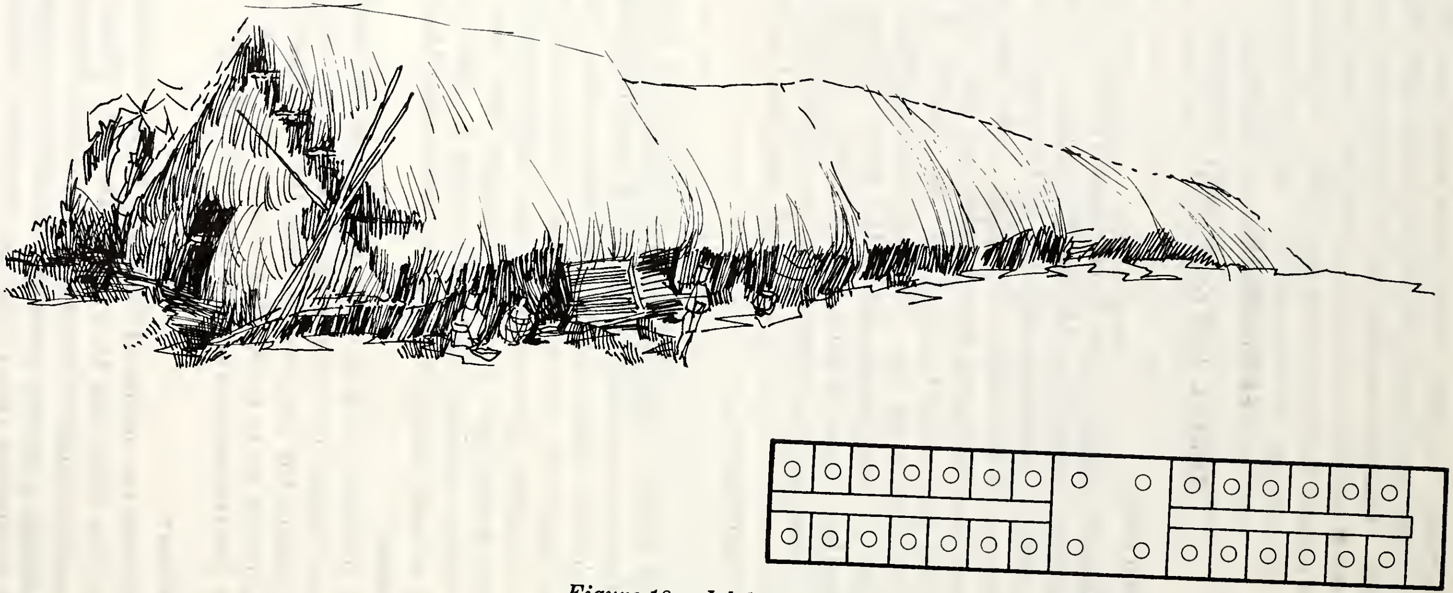


Figure 18. Jeh longhouse.

evening around the family hearth or are recited as invocations during religious ceremonies.[5]

Factual History

What little is known of Jeh history reflects the story of a weak people who have been continually forced deeper into the mountains by stronger highland groups and by the ethnic Vietnamese. The Jeh were so severely oppressed by the neighboring Sedang that at one time they were close to becoming extinct as a distinct group. In the 19th century, in order to escape Sedang oppression, the Jeh retreated so far into the hills that the increasingly inhospitable land could not support their crops. Village organization fell apart in some cases, and from about 1850 on some Jeh abandoned their traditional longhouses in favor of isolated huts.

When the French reached the Jeh area around 1927, the Jeh, believing the French were allies of the belligerent Sedang, desperately resisted them. Some better organized Jeh villages were not pacified until approximately 1935. Under French administration, the Jeh began to reestablish themselves: they again cultivated fields; they began to produce articles for trade; and once more they began to build their traditional longhouses. Many Jeh worked for the French in the construction of National Route 14 across their home region. At first the Jeh would accept only salt and blankets for their labor, but by 1940 some were asking for payment in paper money. Thus, despite their comparative backwardness, the Jeh were among the first of the highland groups to use paper money.[6] Although they still prefer to barter, they do accept paper money in trade with the ethnic Vietnamese.

Settlement Patterns

Jeh villages, built on steep hillsides, are surrounded by cultivated ricefields. As it is difficult to keep the land cleared of jungle growth, most fields are quite small.[7] Usually built along watercourses, the villages may consist of from 1 to 10 longhouses, each about 150 to 600 feet long. The longhouses are built on low pilings, their orientation depending upon the contour of the land. Communal houses have been reported in some Jeh villages.

The interior of a Jeh longhouse is divided into as many compartments as there are nuclear families in the extended family household. The compartments are arranged on each side of a central corridor extending the length of the house. In addition to access to the corridor, each compartment has an outside entrance with a covering which can be lifted to serve either as a door or as a window. Part of the roof can also be raised to give ventilation and light. The houses are not clean, largely because of the tribal prohibition against dirtying water and because of the many hearths with no chimneys to carry smoke and soot out of the house.

A communal room is located in the center of the longhouse. This room serves as a meeting place and reception room, and as sleeping quarters for adolescent boys. The skulls of buffaloes, deer, and gibbon are hung from the walls in this room. On the floor are buffalo tails and coils of solidly woven rattan cable used to attach buffaloes to sacrificial poles. In the evenings, the villagers gather in the communal rooms—or communal house if there is one—and sit around the fire to talk, chant legends and tales, and exchange news with visitors from other villages.

Since 1927, the beginning of the French administration, the Jeh have migrated little. Occasionally they will build a new village some 500 yards or so from the old village, but custom and traditional taboos tend to keep Jeh villages in the same general area. When provoked, however, the Jeh have moved entire villages farther into the mountains. Recently the Jeh have begun to move again—this time to avoid harassment from the Viet Cong.

The water sources near a village are usually pure springs or rushing mountain streams. Most villagers take special care to keep their water source clean; strangers are always warned not to pollute the water.[8]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Jeh are short (averaging about 5 feet 2 inches), muscular and broad-shouldered. Their skin is smooth and bronze colored, and they have wide noses, high cheekbones, and dark brown eyes. The Jeh seldom cut their long, thick, black hair, which they wear in a chignon. Rarely do the Jeh wash their person or their clothes. In the past, the Jeh knocked out their incisor teeth at puberty, but this custom appears to be dying out.[1]

Health

The health of the Jeh who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene practices are rudimentary, due partially to their belief that cleanliness angers the spirits.[2] The Jeh reportedly bathe only once a year and are therefore highly susceptible to various skin diseases.[3]

The principal disease among the Jeh is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal area. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time, but is usually not fatal. The second type, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[4]

Infantile paralysis (polio) is also reportedly prevalent among the Jeh. A recent visitor to the area reported that every Jeh tribesman has polio some time during his life, either dying from it or surviving to develop an immunity.[5]

The three types of typhus found in the Jeh area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[6]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the area.[7]

Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and inadequate sexual hygiene.[8]

All the Jeh reportedly suffer from a lack of vitamin A, and general malnutrition is widespread.[9]

Medical assistance can be given only after the confidence of the Jeh has been won: [10] the Jeh are evidently afraid of inoculations and are distrustful of medical help. Those tribesmen whose confidence has been won will accept medical treatment such as sulfa powder for skin sores.

Endurance

The Jeh are reported to have exceptional endurance. They have a surprising resistance to fatigue and suffering [11] and can travel great distances to find food or to trade with other villages and with the ethnic Vietnamese.[12]

Psychological Characteristics

Like all the highland tribes of the Republic of Vietnam, the Jeh live in what they see as a hostile world. They believe their lives are constantly influenced by innumerable good and evil spirits. Strangers, of whom the Jeh are quite suspicious, are expected to conform to tribal customs: the Jeh have been known to kill strangers who they believe are guilty of violating their taboos.[13] The Jeh are reported to be industrious, honest, and sincere in all they do.[14] They are intelligent and have a tremendous capacity for imitation.[15] They are naturally curious, and once their confidence is won, are hard working.[16]

The Jeh are completely family oriented. An action has importance only to the degree that it is beneficial or harmful to their families. The Jeh have been characterized as serious, thoughtful, and somewhat fatalistic. Jeh men are discreet, dignified, upright, capable of devotion, and responsive to kindness.[17]

The Jeh enjoy evening fireside gossip and conversation. They also like to hear news brought by the Jeh men of neighboring villages.[18]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Jeh society is patriarchal and the extended family, headed by the eldest male member, is its basic unit. Usually a village comprises one or more extended families, with social leadership provided by the eldest members of all the families. The marriage system is exogamous: men select their wives from neighboring villages. After marriage, the newlyweds take up residence in the groom's village.

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Men and women seem to occupy positions of near equality in Jeh society, although the society is patriarchal and only men can become elders. Furthermore, men and women apparently own property individually rather than jointly as husband and wife or with other members of their respective families.[1]

Jeh women are very modest, often hiding when a stranger enters the village; a Jeh women would never leave the village area unless chaperoned by at least one Jeh man.[2]

Highest on the social scale are the village elders. Strictly speaking, there is no village chief in Jeh society. Unless one family constitutes the entire village, the head of each extended family (the eldest male) must be consulted for any decision which affects the village. The weight of any elder's opinion in a decision depends upon his personal wealth—which, in a society this poor, may be only slightly greater than that of his neighbor. Nevertheless all elders are greatly respected by the other members of the village community. Since tradition and custom largely determine individual behavior, the elders' role of interpreting tradition contributes to their influence.[3]

Marriage

In the past, Jeh families kept track of distant blood relatives, for marriages between 10th- or 15th-degree cousins were traditionally forbidden. More recently, since detailed records have not been kept, marriages between 15th-degree cousins would probably be permitted.[4] Sexual relations within the extended family group constitute incest.

In most Jeh villages there is a preponderance of adult males, resulting in the customs of late marriage and the practice of the man's bringing valuable gifts to the woman's family.[5]

When a young man selects a prospective bride, he asks an intermediary to request her parents' consent. The intermediary carries a jar of alcohol and a dead chicken to the girl's family. Once they decide the significance of the omens revealed by the chicken and alcohol, they discuss the value and type of gifts (perhaps rice and rice wine) which the prospective bridegroom must bring to the girl's parents every month of the customary 4-year engagement. Occasionally, the engagement is slightly shorter than 4 years.

Throughout the long engagement, the couple remain almost strangers. Although the young man frequently spends an evening at his fiancee's home, he is never alone with her.

One month before the proposed wedding, the fiancee's parents carefully consider, in the presence of the elders of the family, whether the prospective bridegroom has fulfilled his obligations to them during the engagement. If the deliberations are favorable, the girl's parents and the older members of the family discuss the details of the wedding festivities. They decide the number of jars of rice wine to be offered for the wedding guests. Once again omens are sought for the selection of an auspicious date. Then the young man's friends build the nuptial house, decorating it with garlands of flowers.

The villages of both the bride and the bridegroom participate in the wedding celebration, ringing gongs, visiting, drinking rice wine, and eating the meat of sacrificial buffaloes.

During the night of the celebration, the bridegroom's friends escort him by torchlight to his fiancee's village, where the villagers greet them with welcoming shouts and rice wine.

Meanwhile the bride pretends to hide in her village. Her brothers and their friends find her quickly and return her to her father's house, where her bridegroom soon comes to take her away. When the couple return to the bridegroom's village, they remain in the nuptial house for a lunar month. During this time, only the bridegroom's mother may enter this house. She provides them with whatever they need.[6]

Child-Rearing Practices and Education

The Jeh child is nursed by his mother until the age of 2 to 3. When he is about 6 months old, however, his mother begins to feed him cooked rice which she has chewed.

Until the child is 4 or 5 years old, he is carried on his parent's back. All children are allowed free run of the village and go without clothing.

Once male children learn to walk, they are provided with small bows and arrows and other small-scale tools and weapons. Although at first they may only use them to annoy the domestic animals, they are ultimately taught to hunt, fish, and survive on the trail. Young girls remain at home, watching the household fire for their mothers and learning to imitate the actions of the adult women. When they are a little older, the girls help with easy household tasks and the cultivation of garden plants.

A family with no daughters will ask one of its sons to take over the tasks normally performed by daughters.[7]

Death and Burial

There is little information available concerning the rites and customs surrounding the death and burial of the Jeh tribesmen. It has been reported, however, that when a Jeh dies, he is buried in an open coffin carved from a tree trunk. One end of the coffin is decorated with a carving of a buffalo head, symbolizing the wish of the Jeh to "rest in the buffalo" after death and representing the vitality which the sacrifice of the buffalo gives to the village and its agricultural endeavors.[8]

Inheritance Customs

The property of a tribesman is divided among his children after his death; his wife or eldest son then serves as the guardian of the property. If the eldest son serves as guardian, he is given the title *pa nje.*

When a son marries, his share of the family inheritance constitutes the first portion of a new patrimony. This patrimony consists of the fields, gongs, and dishes which are the son's possessions. On his death, these items will be inherited by his children.

When a daughter marries, she gives her part of the inheritance to the *pa nje.* But if a daughter marries a very poor man, she might retain her portion of the inheritance by returning to her village with her husband. On the other hand, if a young man marries and leaves his own village for that of his wife, he must relinquish his portion of the inheritance.[9]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Due to their isolation, little information is available concerning the specific folk beliefs and superstitions of the Jeh. However, it is known that almost all their activities are governed by numerous customs and taboos. Like other Montagnard groups, the Jeh probably have prescribed methods and procedures governing everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Jeh have handed down an oral tradition of customs and taboos from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law.

Dress

The Jeh dress very simply. The basic garment for men is the loincloth. Women wear a blue cotton skirt reaching from the waist to below the knees and often wrap their calves with bands of white cloth. The main additional item of clothing is an all-purpose blanket worn as an upper garment by both men and women. It is doubtful whether the Jeh own much in the way of ornamental or decorative clothing, although some men cover their hair knots with a net adorned by multicolored beads.

Reportedly the Jeh have a clothing shortage. They do not weave their own cloth but must obtain it through trade with other tribes or the Vietnamese. When they can afford it, they buy army shirts from the Vietnamese.[1]

Folk Beliefs

Although the Jeh are believed to be among the most superstitious of all the Montagnard groups of the Republic of Vietnam, little information concerning their specific beliefs is available. An American missionary who worked among them stated that he had never observed a tribe that offered so many animal sacrifices to the trails, mountains, and other prominent features of the surrounding terrain.[2] The Jeh, believing that their harsh surroundings are controlled by a multitude of spirits, offer sacrifices in the hope of easing their existence.

The Jeh are reported to bathe only once a year—and than only after offering an appropriate sacrifice, lest they anger the spirits by presuming to be clean.[3]

Customs Relating to Animals

Certain animals are considered taboo by the Jeh. When tribesmen sight a taboo animal, they refuse to use the trail on which it was seen. The Jeh are known to be afraid of tigers and leopards, probably for a combination of spiritual reasons and actual knowledge of the beasts' predatory nature.[4]

The Jeh value the buffalo highly. They save buffalo skulls, painting them with blood and chalk; these are hung in the communal room, solidly attached so they will not "run away." The Jeh living in the house feed the buffaloes symbolically by putting grass in the mouths, nostrils, and even the eye sockets of the skulls. The Jeh believe the spirits which the skulls represent affect the fertility of the fields and the general prosperity of the village. As many as 92 skulls have been counted in a single Jeh longhouse.[5]

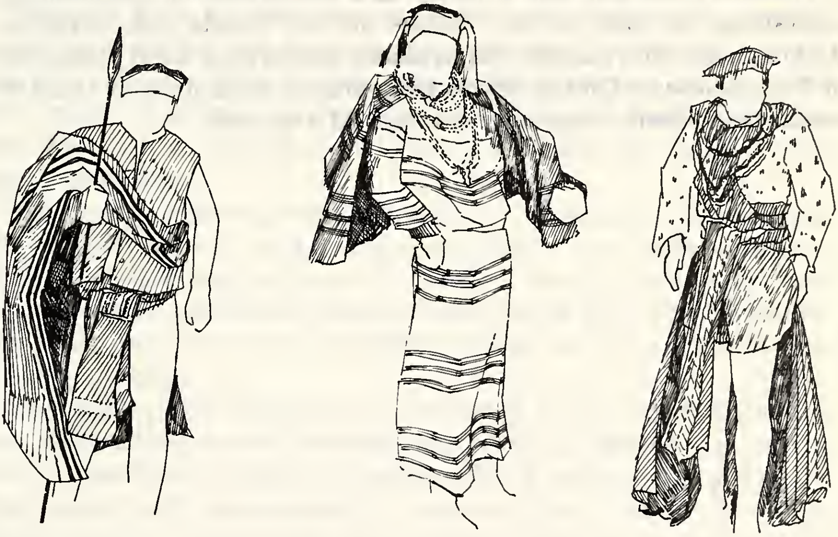


Figure 19. Jeh tribespeople in ceremonial dress.

Eating Customs

The basis of the Jeh diet is rice, supplemented by corn and manioc. Pieces of gourd or green bananas are sometimes mixed with rice; sometimes mixtures of rice and corn or corn and manioc are also cooked. When there is no salt, a pinch of wood cinder is used for seasoning. Freshwater shellfish are cooked in a pan with the leaves of a shrub resembling a mulberry bush. Tadpoles, broiled and then grilled, are well liked by the Jeh, as are June bug larvae with red pepper. Occasionally the meat of a rat, squirrel, hedgehog, or monkey adds variety to the menu.

Venison is rare; but when available, it is generally cut up on the spot, each person carrying what he can back to his house. Stag tripe is considered a great delicacy. The grilled venison is eaten at a great feast. When such a windfall occurs, everyone eats until he is satiated; then the rest of the meat is smoked and hung from the rafters.[6]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Jeh rigidly subject themselves to the proscriptions of their traditional heritage; outsiders are also held accountable to these laws. The Jeh have reportedly killed people who disobeyed their taboos: four soldiers, apparently guilty of "misbehavior" in a Jeh village, were once put to death. Similar treatment could probably be expected by an outsider who broke a taboo, made himself unwanted, or refused to leave the village.[7]

However, the Jeh are friendly and hospitable to neighboring tribesmen, as long as the visitors do not violate Jeh customs. Although no information was available concerning their reception of Vietnamese or United States personnel, it is likely that the Jeh would treat them hospitably for fear of reprisal.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The religion of the Jeh tribe is animistic. The Jeh worship all natural forces, attributing spiritual life to the sky, the earth, the water, the trees, and other inanimate objects of their natural environment.[1] Jeh beliefs are motivated by a strong fear of the unknown and of many circumstances believed to cause suffering or death. They feel helpless and at the mercy of the numerous spirits responsible for their adversities and from whom they constantly attempt to extract benefits in return for animal sacrifices.[2]

There is little information available on Jeh religious practices and it is doubtful that any two Jeh villages observe identical religious customs. Nevertheless, many Jeh do seem to have a common belief in at least two principal dieties, the Heavenly Being and the Spirit of the Hearth or House, as well as in the spirits of their ancestors.

The Heavenly Being, whom the Jeh call Ra, seems to be the most abstract, mysterious, and omnipotent spirit. They believe he presides over all of nature from his dwelling place in *ciok* or heaven. The tribesmen say that thunder is the voice of Ra. The words Ra and Ciok are used interchangeably when the Jeh refer to the Heavenly Being.

The Spirit of the Hearth also commands great respect from the Jeh, who believe that he watches over all the members of a household. The dwelling place or kingdom of this spirit is thought to be the house itself, independent of whoever lives there. Should a family abandon their home, they leave it intact, for to destroy the house would be to destroy the shelter and kingdom of the Spirit of the Hearth. Moreover, the tribesmen believe that destruction of the house would change the spirit into a terrifying and angry god, bent on revenge.

The Jeh believe the spirits of the deceased protect the family against malevolent spirits: sometimes by friendly intercession, sometimes by warring with the evil spirits. Often the Jeh invite both the ancestral and evil spirits to fraternal banquets inside the house to encourage friendly settlements between them.[3]

Apparently there are also water spirits in the Jeh religious beliefs. One observer cautioned against contaminating water supplies or doing anything that could possibly be offensive near the water source, as this appears to violate Jeh religious custom.[4]

Description of Religious Rituals

The principal religious ritual among the Jeh is the sacrifice, offered to appease or to avoid offending spirits, or to invoke pardon for persons who have committed offenses. The importance of a sacrifice is proportional to the gravity of an offense or to the extremity of need.

The Jeh appear to be more fear ridden and superstitious than any of the other tribes of the Vietnamese highlands: according to one observer, they rely on sacrifices more often than other groups to allay their fears.

The buffalo is the principal sacrificial animal. The Jeh will travel great distances across rugged mountainous territory to obtain buffaloes for sacrifices.[5]

When sacrificing a buffalo, the villagers sound gongs throughout the night, drink much rice wine, dance, and pray to the spirits. The sacrificial buffalo is tied to an ornamented, hand-carved sacrificial pole. The following day, when the time comes for the offering, the Jeh chase the buffalo around the pole to spear and kill it.[6]

The Jeh are known to perform special rituals whenever they enter a new territory. Approaching a mound of debris and accumulated vegetation, each traveler adds to the pile a green twig, a bunch of leaves or a handful of grass, and utters the following prayer:

> Let all that is evil remain behind this boundary; I am coming in with good intentions. Let sickness and death remain behind; let the spirits of the deceased and spirits of the forest protect me.[7]

Missionary Contacts

From 1956 to 1959, the Christian and Missionary Alliance attempted to convert the Jeh to Christianity with little success. Failure of most missionary efforts has been due to the difficulty of penetrating the mountainous terrain and to Jeh resistance to change. Since 1961, missionaries have not been able to reach the Jeh, for increased military operations have made their territory unsafe.

One missionary reported that in at least one village the Jeh were receptive to his presence, enjoyed visiting his house, and liked learning about the world outside their own. However, most Jeh have had little contact with missionaries.[8]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The slash-and-burn cultivation of rice is the basis of Jeh economy. Briefly, this technique of cultivation involves cutting down during the winter months all vegetation in the new area and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as fertilizer which makes the soil rich enough for 3 to 4 years of crops. When the fields no longer support a crop, the village tribesmen repeat the slash-and-burn clearing process in a new area.

In addition to rice, the Jeh grow papayas, bananas, guavas, pineapples, and corn. These secondary crops are usually grown in small garden plots near the longhouses.

Farming is supplemented by cinnamon trading, hunting, fishing, and gathering edible berries and vegetables from the forest. Although there is little industry in the Western sense of the word, the Jeh are reportd to practice ironwork, pottery making, and basket weaving. In recent years the Jeh economy has become more dependent on cinnamon trade with other Montagnard tribes and the Vietnamese, but the Jeh rarely have the surplus needed to establish thriving trade contacts; consequently, their life is reported to be harder than that of the southern tribes such as the Jarai, Rhade, and Bahnar.[1]

The most important domestic animal raised by the Jeh is the buffalo, used for food and prized as the most significant sacrificial animal.

Special Arts and Skills

The Jeh engage in ironwork, pottery making, and basket weaving. Materials used in the latter skill are bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood. These materials are also used to construct matting, light walls, traps, pipes, weapons, and containers for water, salt, and tobacco.[2]

Exchange System and Trade

The Jeh favor a barter system for intertribal trade, although they are familiar with a monetary system though trade with the Vietnamese. Among themselves, the Jeh prefer to barter, often fixing prices in terms of buffaloes, copper pots, jars, and gongs.

At one time the Jeh were reported to be extremely fond of paper currency because it could be folded and concealed in bamboo tubes. They accept paper money when they trade in Vietnamese towns; they also use this currency to buy agricultural implements, cloth, iron, and domestic animals to take back to their villages. The chief items of trade are salt, gongs, iron, brass, cloth, and buffaloes, which have prestigious as well as practical value.

Cinnamon is the most important trade item available to the Jeh. They strip the bark from cinnamon trees and haul it to the Vietnamese towns of Tra My and Tra Bong. Reputedly the Vietnamese profit tremendously from the cinnamon trade: they pay the Jeh about 500 piasters for a load of cinnamon and resell it for as much as 5000 piasters. One source states that the Jeh are so dependent on the cinnamon trade that loss of it for any prolonged time would create an economic depression from which they could not recover.[3]

Distribution of Wealth

The Jeh are not a prosperous people. Their farming, hunting and trading barely suffice to feed them; surpluses for trade are rare. Poverty is a condition common to all Jeh families, with little differentiation in their standard of living. Some families may be wealthier than others, but the difference is generally so slight as to be insignificant.[4]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The highest political unit of the Jeh is the village. These isolated people have apparently never developed an overall tribal organization or united under a single leader. Each village or hamlet is independent of its neighbors. There is no indication of even a loose alliance between individual villages, as is found among other Montagnard tribes. Relations among Jeh villages are friendly, and a traveler from a neighboring village will be given food and a place to spend the night.[1]

Authority within a Jeh village having more than one extended family does not reside in one man. Individual extended families form the primary social organization of the village; each family has its headman (usually the oldest male) and its inner council of elders. Generally, decisions affecting the welfare of the entire village will be rendered only after combined deliberations by the headmen of the various families and their chosen advisers.[2]

Whenever the village must deal with another village or outsiders, one or several individuals may be selected to act as a representative or intermediary for the entire group. Although the qualifications of this representative are unknown, it is doubtful that he ever acts independently during negotiations. Persons unfamiliar with Jeh customs might mistake this man for a chief; however, in reality, he probably only represents the consensus of the headmen of the village families.[3]

Although a chief or headman as such can rarely be found in a Jeh village, certain individuals will often play a powerful role when decisions are formulated. Wealth is usually the most important factor of influence. The status of each headman is determined by his family's possessions, such as rice paddies, buffaloes, gongs, and jars. Since a family's holdings, at least in ricefields, are normally proportionate to its size, the most influential headman often comes from the largest family; thus, his power within the village as a whole will be more pervasive than that of the other headmen. Such influence, however, may be short lived, for great differences in wealth and family size are uncommon among the Jeh. A seemingly minor increase in the affluence of a family can result in its headman becoming the most powerful man in the village. It is reported that such changes in status occur frequently.[4]

Age is also an important determinant for status within the Jeh family and village. The elders are always accorded profound respect. Before decisions are made, they are consulted in deference to their wisdom, experience, and knowledge of tribal customs and laws. Effective action by the family headman or by the headmen of several families is always dependent on the advice of the elders. The elders have authority to make a final decision, however, only in cases specifically concerning their immediate family, that is, their own wives and children.[5]

To integrate the Jeh into the political life of the country, the Vietnamese Government has attempted to appoint one individual within most tribal villages as liaison. This person is expected to transmit Government decrees and communications to the villages by word of mouth. Since the Jeh protect their own headmen and elders by refusing to identify them to strangers, it is doubtful that this Government appointee is ever one of the actual leaders in the village. Likewise, the appointee probably has little real status within the village. Being selected as the Government appointee is a dubious honor, because this person is usually held responsible by the villagers for any misdeeds allegedly committed by the Government in the village.[6]

Both the mountainous isolation of the Jeh and their strong determination to retain their traditional system of customs and taboos aggravated the relations between the Jeh and the Central Government in the past. Relative pacification of the Jeh did not occur until the late 1930's. Moreover, no Central Government has ever made a concentrated attempt to maintain contact with the entire Jeh population.

The French apparently had very little influence on the Jeh, although they did establish forts in the Jeh territory during the Indochina War and did train a few Jeh for military service. An American missionary who lived in the area in the late 1950's reported that he may have been the first white man to go to some of the remote hillside villages.[7]

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapprochement between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government had supported a policy of permitting the Jeh and other tribes to be separate administrative entities. Now, however, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

Although Jeh taboos permit the tribespeople to establish new villages in a restricted geographic area (for example, the populace of a village may establish a new village just 500 yards from the first village), Government resettlement proposals for new Jeh villages apparently have violated these taboos.[8] For example, the Government attempted to persuade the Jeh to relocate their villages in the Tra My area. But the Jeh responded by moving their villages farther into the mountains, telling Government officials that they would not comply with such decisions to move their villages to sites selected by the Government. In at least one instance, such a move would have left Jeh buffalo trails across a river from the Jeh houses. This, the Jeh thought, would cause their people to sicken and die.[9]

Legal System

The Jeh have no written language and thus no written code of laws. However, nearly all Jeh behavior is strictly governed by unwritten tribal laws expressed in terms of taboos and sanctions. The failure of a Jeh or even of a stranger to adhere to these traditional codes may result in severe punishment.

Authority to punish depends on the degree of violation. An offense that has no consequence outside the immediate family of the wrongdoer (for instance, a child striking his father) is settled within the family itself. If the culprit's actions have harmed the entire extended family, then the elders and headman of that family will determine what sanctions are to be applied, according to their interpretations of the traditional oral code. When an offense affects all the extended families of a village, the matter requires general consultation by all the family headmen and elders of the separate families; in serious cases, the offender's entire family may be held responsible for his actions.[10]

If a village-wide decision is disagreeable to one or several extended families within the village, they may establish a new village. Every attempt is made to avoid such secessions, which gravely weaken the morale of both parties.[11]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences, which could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[12]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[13] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses, when all parties involved are Montagnards.[14]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[15] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[16]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court, all minor offenses, and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[17]

At the national level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[18]

Subversive Influences

Their isolation and marginal subsistence make the Jeh susceptible to the subversive activities of the Viet Cong. The primary objective of the subversive elements is to win allegiance of the Jeh and to turn the Jeh into an active, hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals. Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the next phase is an intensive propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Then individuals are recruited, trained, and assigned to various Viet Cong support or combat units.[19]

An American returning from the Jeh area in 1965 reported that he saw little evidence of Viet Cong influence in the Dak Sut area at that time. He attributed this to the fact that Jeh villages in the Dak Sut district are located along National Route 14, thus easily accessible to the Central Government. The same source believed that many of the Jeh actively disliked the Viet Cong.[20]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Oral communication is the principal means of disseminating information among the Jeh. The vast majority of Jeh neither read nor write any language. They do, however, have an interest in news and reportedly spend their evenings sitting around the fire in the communal room of their homes telling stories of recent events. One observer returned from the Jeh area in 1965 noted that participation in these evening sessions might provide an opportunity to introduce desired information.[1]

No specific information is available about Jeh familiarity with and access to radios and movies. It is probable that due to their isolation and lack of advancement the Jeh have few, if any, radios and are generally unfamiliar with movies. However, judging from experience with other tribes, short movies covering simple subjects presented in the Jeh language might be an effective means to inform or instruct them.

Additionally, various missionaries in the area have found that simple diagrams and drawings are useful devices for communicating concepts to the Jeh.[2]

Although the Jeh as yet have no written language of their own, material written in French or Vietnamese will have some effect, as a limited number of the tribesmen do read these languages. These tribesmen could be expected to communicate information contained in written materials to the remainder of the tribesmen. Data about the successful use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Jeh should be oriented around the principle of improving conditions in the tribal villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against Viet Cong harassment are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the tribespeople. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the tribal elders in order to show respect for the tribal political structure. The Jeh tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Jeh tribespeople would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. Reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained: the Jeh resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Jeh groups into new and larger villages, the control of malaria and other medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.[1]

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Jeh encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
    e. Introduction of insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    a. Provide basic literacy training.
    b. Provide basic citizenship education.
    c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Jeh can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen can serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Jeh can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership, they can be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat unit.[1] The Jeh have a reputation for engaging in aggressive warfare if they are provoked or if they have a justifiable reason.[2]

In the past the Jeh were considered capable fighters, whether fighting offensively in raids against other groups or defensively within their villages. Some Jeh had military training with the French and are capable of sophisticated combat operations. Recently some Jeh have been trained by U.S. personnel and are familiar with U.S operational techniques as well as modern equipment.

Hostile Activity Toward the Jeh and Tribal Reaction

When psychological pressures to win Jeh support fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. Frequently, the Jeh yield and cooperate with the Viet Cong; without Government training and support, they do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong. Jeh villages have no able organization for defense except those equipped, trained, and organized by the Government. Jeh villages with adequate training and support will defend themselves and will initiate aggressive action against the Viet Cong.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

In the past the Jeh relied upon crossbows, spears, swords, and knives. The Jeh also are familiar with the use of traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks used as foot traps. Some Jeh received miltiary training from the French and are familiar with modern weapons. Their relatively small stature limits the weapons the Jeh can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine.

The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning Automatic Rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled, carried by two or more men, and then quickly reassembled.

The Jeh pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Jeh can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Jeh cannot handle sophisticated devices—such as mortars, explosives, and mines—as proficiently as hand weapons. They find more abstract and technical aspects of such weapons—such as timing trajectories—difficult to absorb.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Jeh can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Jeh learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

Some Jeh are veterans of service with the French and are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE JEH

Every action of the Jeh tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Jeh may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Jeh are listed below:

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Jeh village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village elders who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Jeh. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Jeh tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process, requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some credit for civic action projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Jeh should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.

3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Jeh ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Jeh house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Jeh women. This could create distrust and dissension.
8. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not mock Jeh religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Jeh life.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Jeh property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Jeh language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Jeh are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Jeh areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and should have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 140.
2. Rev. Charles E. Long, Interview (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, July 1964). [Mennonite missionary.]
3. J. Hoffet, "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Géographie*, LIX (1933), p. 21.
4. Long, *op. cit.*
5. H. C. Darby, (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 83–84.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Long, *op. cit.*
9. Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. *Ibid.;* David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 4; Long, *op. cit.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Capt. London, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965).
5. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1046–47.
6. Paul P. Guilleminet, "L'Économie des tribus moi de l'Indochine," *Revue Indochinoise Juridique et Économique*, XXI (1943), p. 90.
7. Long, *op. cit.*
8. *Ibid.;* Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Louis Condominas, "Notes sur les Mois du haut Song Trang," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), p. 19.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Long, *op. cit.;* Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17; Laura Irene Smith, *Victory in Viet Nam* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), p. 153.
2. Long, *op. cit.;* Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

3. Long, *op. cit.*
4. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–24; Long, *op. cit.*
6. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–16.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–13.
9. Long, *op. cit.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.;* Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.
12. Long, *op. cit.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, London, *op. cit.*
15. Long, *op. cit.*
16. London, *op. cit.*
17. Condominas, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
18. Long, *op. cit.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Long, *op. cit.*
2. Condominas, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31.
4. Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
5. Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–29.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
8. Hoffet, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–32.
9. Condominas, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Long, *op. cit.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. Gordon Hedderly Smith, *The Blood Hunters* (Chicago: World Wide Prayer and Missionary Alliance, 1942), p. 124.
4. Long, *op. cit.*
5. Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
6. Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–23.
7. Long, *op. cit.*

VI. RELIGION

1. Long, *op. cit.*
2. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
3. Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–33.
4. Long, *op. cit.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–33.
8. Long, *op. cit.*

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Long, *op. cit.*
2. *Ibid.;* Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 6, 22.
3. Long, *op. cit.;* Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–23; Hoffet, *op. cit.*, p. 21; LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
4. Long, *op. cit.*

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Long, *op. cit.*

2. Kopf, *op. cit.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.;* Guilleminet, *op. cit.,* p. 114.
5. Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–31.
6. Kopf, *op. cit.;* Long, *op. cit.*
7. Long, *op. cit.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. Kopf, *op. cit.*
11. Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–31.
12. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
13. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
14. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–143.
20. London, *op. cit.*

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Long, *op. cit.*
2. Laura Irene Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information, *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962* (Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962), p. 119.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. London, *op. cit.*
2. Long, *op. cit.*

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE JEH

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Condominas, Louis. "Notes sur les Mois du haut Song Trang," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXVI (1951), 13–38.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.) *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "L'Économie des tribus moi de l'Indochine," *Revue Indochinoise Juridique et Économique,* XXI (1943), 68–124.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure," Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Hoffet, J. "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Géographie,* LIX (1933), 1–43.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. "The 'Slash-and-Burn' (*Ray*) Agricultural System of the Mountain Populations of Central Vietnam," *Proceedings of the Ninth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association,* VII. Bangkok: Secretariat, Ninth Pacific Science Congress, Department of Science, 1959, 56–59.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

London, Capt. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard

Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Long, Rev. Charles E. Interview. Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, July 1964. [Mennonite missionary.]

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), 13.

Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information. *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962.* Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962.

"Since the Last Issue: Buffalo Sacrifice," *Jungle Frontiers,* XII (Winter 1962), 13.

Smith, Gordon Hedderly. *The Blood Hunters.* Chicago: World Wide Prayer and Missionary Alliance, 1942.

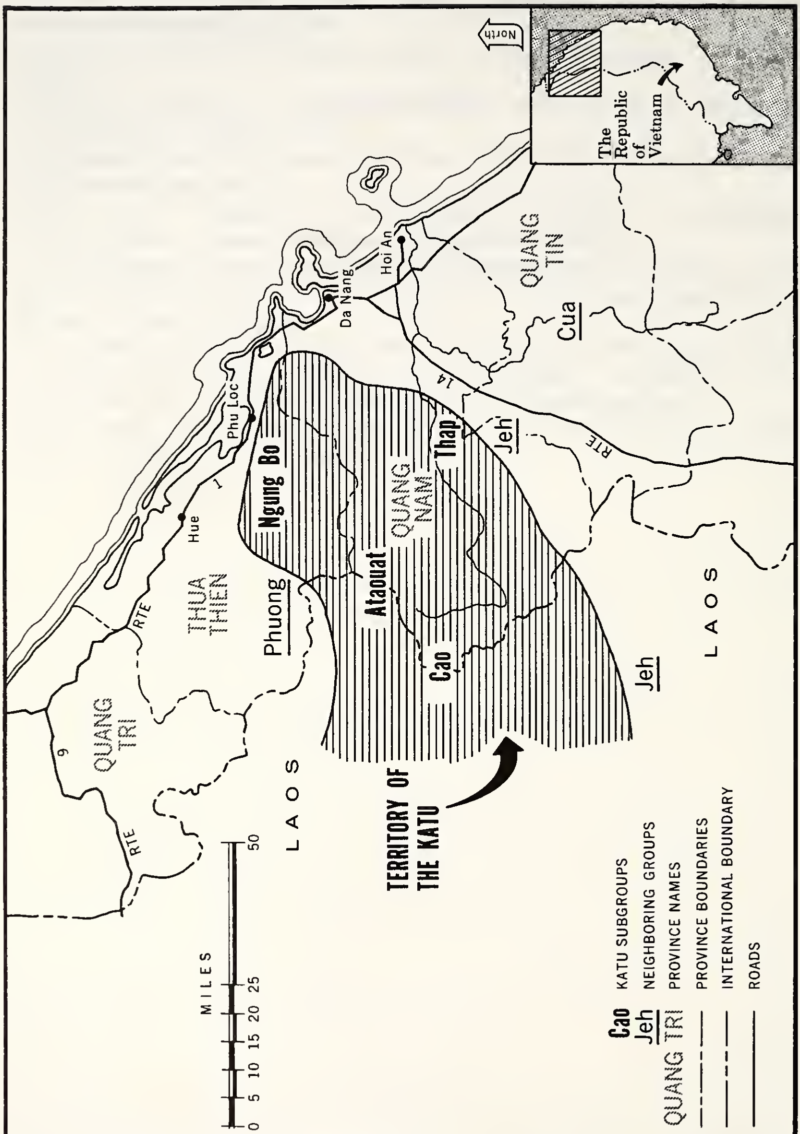
Smith, Laura Irene. *Victory in Viet Nam.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of State. *Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam.* (Department of State Publication No. 7839), Far Eastern Series 130, February 1965.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964.


North
The Republic of Vietnam
QUANG TRI
THUA THIEN
QUANG NAM
QUANG TIN
LAOS
LAOS
Hue
Phu Loc
Da Nang
Hoi An
RTE
RTE
RTE
9
1
14
Phuong
Ngung Bo
Ataouat
Thap
Cao
Jeh
Jeh
Cua
TERRITORY OF THE KATU
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
Cao KATU SUBGROUPS
Jeh NEIGHBORING GROUPS
QUANG TRI PROVINCE NAMES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
ROADS

The Katu Subgroups

CHAPTER 9. THE KATU

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Katu, a Mon-Khmer Montagnard group, inhabit the territory inland from the coastal cities of Da Nang and Hoi An and across the border into Laos. The tribe is divided into the "highland" and the "lowland" Katu: the "highland" Katu inhabit the higher mountains near the Laotian border, while the "lowland" Katu live in lower mountains nearer the coastal regions.

The Katu have a patriarchal social organization and live in widely dispersed villages. The household consists of the extended family. The head of the extended family is the household head and owns all the family property.

Leadership in Katu villages is provided by a chief and a council of elders. In some villages the chief is elected; in other villages the position is hereditary.

All aspects of the social, political, and economic life of the Katu are influenced by their religious beliefs. In addition to offering animal sacrifices, the Katu engage in blood hunts or ritual murders to appease the spirits.

Name and Size of Group

The name Katu, meaning savage, is applied to this group by neighboring tribes. The Katu are also known as the Kato, Ka-Tu, or Kantu. The Katu refer to themselves as "Monui" or "people" followed by the name of their specific village.[1]

Recent estimates of the Katu population range from 20,000 [2] to 30,000.[3] A source dated 1938 estimated the number of Katu at 25,000.[4]

Location

The Katu inhabit the northern plateau and mountain regions of the Republic of Vietnam, west of the cities of Da Nang (Tourane) and Hoi An (Faifo). Katu villages are concentrated along the slopes and valleys of the Song Giang, Song Cai, and Song Boung Rivers in the Provinces of Quang Nam and Thua Thien. Scattered

Katu villages are also found in Quang Tin Province, and an undetermined number of Katu live in Laos.[5]

As noted, the Katu are commonly divided into "lowland" and "highland" groups.[6] There are at least four Katu subgroups. The Ngung Bo and the Thap are both eastern lowland groups, the former living along the tributaries of the upper Se Khong River, the latter living east of the Cao in the An Diem hinterland. The Ataouat, or Ka-Taouat, and the Cao, western highland groups, live in the Ataouat Massif, where the Se Khong and the Song Boung Rivers originate.[7]

The neighbors of the Katu include the ethnic Vietnamese to the east and northeast, the Jeh tribe to the south, the Phuong tribe to the northwest, and various Laotian tribal peoples to the west.

Terrain Analysis

The Katu territory in the Annam Cordillera is bordered on the south and west by the Massif du Ngoc Ang and on the west and north by the Massif du Pouak. This area, a plateau rising sharply from the narrow coastal plains, is cut by gorges and is dominated by isolated peaks, including one rising to a height of 8,200 feet.

In general the rivers are short, flowing swiftly through steep rocky valleys. Rain-bearing monsoons and typhoons frequently and rapidly alter the currents and depth of these rivers.

The summer monsoon (May–October) and the winter monsoon (November–January) provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer, these winds come mainly from the southwest; in the winter, from the northeast. The eastern portion of the region has the most rain from September to January, while in the western portion the rainy season occurs during the summer months. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the monsoon-borne rain. Precipitation is high—averaging more than 80 inches in the lower elevation and more than 150 inches in the higher areas. Normally the weather is warm and humid, with frequent cloudiness, especially from January to April.

Temperatures vary by roughly 20 degrees between summer and winter. Actual surface temperatures average 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in winter (January) and above 85 degrees Fahrenheit in summer (July).

Typhoons influence the climate of this area and are especially dangerous from July to September, when heavy rainfall often causes extensive material damage by flooding and the uprooting of forests. During the rainy season the area is virtually inaccessible.

The high and relatively evenly distributed precipitation gives this area rain forest vegetation of two distinct belts. At the higher elevations is the primary rain forest, where the trees, with an average height of 75 to 90 feet, form a continuous canopy. Below this canopy are smaller trees of 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this type of forest and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, this forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.

The second belt or secondary rain forest, which develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated, is more extensive in this area. In this forest the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.

There are no roads in the Katu area. The jungle has reclaimed the French-built, dry-weather, unsurfaced road running from Da Nang to Kontum and extending through the southeastern section of the area along the Son Thu Bon River. In any case, it would be difficult to keep any road in year-round usable condition. There are very few trails in the area, and they are difficult, if not impossible, to see from the air.

The rivers, often embedded in valleys with steep longitudinal profiles, are for the most part unnavigable. During high water, very small boats and canoes can pass through the rivers; however, typhoons increase the danger of water transportation.[8]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

The Katu are grouped with the Mon-Khmer peoples by language and culture. The Mon-Khmer ethnic stock is believed to have originated in the upper valleys of the Mekong River in Yunnan Province of southern China.[1]

Language

A Mon-Khmer language, the Katu language consist of a basically monosyllabic vocabulary supplemented by a number of borrowed polysyllabic words. Each Katu subgroup has its own distinct dialect, but these dialects are reportedly similar enough to be mutually intelligible.[2]

Very few Katu understand any other languages; a small number of tribesmen have a limited knowledge of the languages of neighboring tribes or of Vietnamese, French, or English. Some Katu, educated in North Vietnam, reportedly speak fluent Vietnamese.[3]

There is no written form of the Katu language, although Protestant missionaries are currently devising one for translation of the Bible.

Legendary History

Generally speaking, the legends of the origin of the Katu, of the spirits, and of the world are part of the oral tradition of the Katu. Because the Katu have no written language, they have passed down by word of mouth legends, tales of legendary heroes, anecdotes about tribal members, proverbs, and traditional tribal laws. To preserve the tribal traditions unchanged, the legends are usually remembered and chanted in verse form, most frequently in the evening around the family hearth or as an invocation in a religious ceremony.[4]

There was no specific information available on the legends of the Katu.

Factual History

There is little information about the factual history of the Katu. Presumably they originally lived in the coastal area adjacent to their present territory and were forced into the upland region by the expansion of the Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese).

Annamese records of the mid-19th century mention the Katu as an aggressive tribe engaging in blood hunts*—ritual murders to appease evil spirits—against the Annamese in the lowlands. During the reigns of Emperors Minh-Mang and Thieu-Tri of Annam, Katu raids were so numerous that the Annamese government was forced to organize a Chui-Yen or Acceptance of Peace Ceremony in the hope of bribing the Katu to refrain from these raids.

Blood hunts were also perpetrated against neighboring tribes and even against Katu villages. When their enemies finally fought to stop the bloodshed, they showed the Katu no mercy, so savage were the Katu during their blood hunts.

The first French penetration into the Katu lands was Captain Debay's reconnaissance expedition early in this century; later, prior to World War I, a colonial government official, Mr. Sogny, entered the land of the Katu. However, thereafter there was little contact between the Katu and the French until 1935, when a planned settlement of Katu lands was started and six French outposts were established.[5]

Settlement Patterns

Katu villages are usually located close to a water source or a brook. The village is surrounded by a fence and may contain from 5 to 50 houses arranged in a circle around a sacrificial post.[6] In the larger villages a communal house is also found in the center area.

Katu houses are quite neat, comfortable, oval-shaped bamboo and wood structures set on pilings about 1 to 2 feet above the ground. A thatched roof, sloping down from a center ridge pole, is so close to the ground as to require stooping to get into the house. Entrance is through a double sliding door in the front of the house. Floors are usually a lattice of bamboo.

A house belonging to a chief or wealthy tribesman measures an average of 30 feet by 15 feet, with a central post or a *tanol* supporting the framework; the larger the house, the larger the central post. The roof beam, supported by the central post, in turn supports the crossbeams set on boards and connects with smaller vertical poles supporting the roof. These poles are frequently covered with painted designs of hunting or fishing scenes, sacred animals, geometric figures, or other unusual signs. The walls are plaited bamboo, from 3 to 4.5 feet in height. The roof of finely woven pandamus leaves or palm fronds is protected from the wind by long logs laid over it as weights. At each corner of the roof,

---

* See "Customs and Taboos," p. 361.

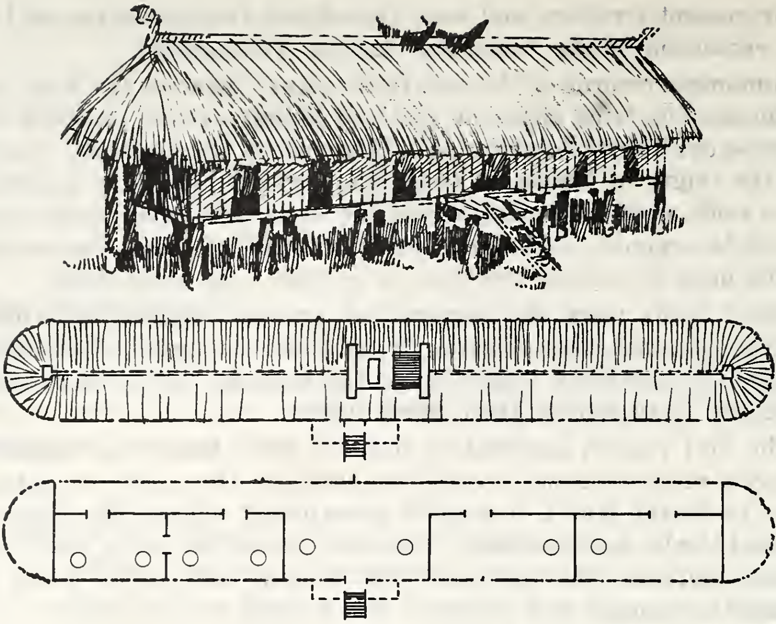


Figure 20. Ngung Bo house.

the wooden framework is sculptured, representing stylized animals, human silhouettes, or phallic symbols.

The interior of a Katu house consists of only one room, used both for living quarters and storage. At the arc-shaped end of the room is a stove—a block of hard earth with a wood fire built around three stones.[7] The embers of the fire are never allowed to go out. Alongside the stove is a screen to hold firewood and to keep the sparks in the hearth. The interior of the house has a blackish veneer caused by the smoke, since there is no flue to permit the smoke to escape.

There is no furniture in a Katu house; household utensils include jars for the storage of grain and for fermenting rice, bamboo tubes filled with water, copper pots, wooden bowls, clay pots, baskets,

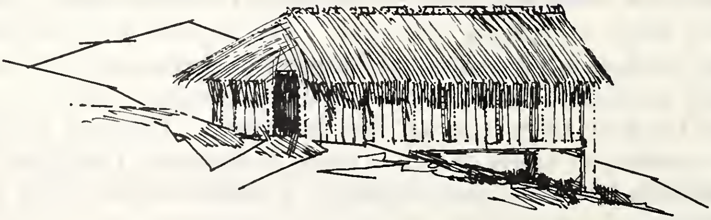


Figure 21. Thap house.

and trays. Drums, bronze gongs, fish nets, and animal traps are also found in the house. Suspended from the ceiling are ears of corn, fresh game, and fish. Knives and long spears are stuck in the roof.[8]

In all the large villages the communal house or *gual*, similar to the individual dwellings, is the largest structure in the community, often having a roof as high as 35 feet. Construction of the communal house is a cooperative venture: the village bears the expense, and all the men of the village contribute their labor.

No women are admitted to the communal house. It is the social center for males, serving as a sleeping place for young bachelors and old men; a meeting place for the men of the village; a seat of the village council; and a haven for ancestral spirits of tribespeople who died a natural death. In addition, the communal house plays an important role as a sanctuary: no quarrels or fights are tolerated within its walls. Under its roof a stranger may find asylum.

The walls of the communal house are hung in disarray with the heads of birds and animals—buffalo, deer, wild goats, and toucans. In some villages one may find carved masks of human appearance hanging on the walls of the communal house. The masks are blackened by smoke from the fireplaces and are always hung in even numbers from 2 to 10.

The sacrificial poles, which are found in the center of nearly every Katu village, are ornately sculptured with designs of sacred animals such as the cock, toucan, fish, snake, iguana, and tortoise; with geometric figures; or with designs such as a cross, the sun, and the stars. Only three colors are used in finishing the sculpture: black, made by wood smoke; red, from betel leaves; and white, from lime. On feast days, the sacrificial poles are embellished with two wing-like arms pointing upwards. Le Pichon suggests that in ancient times these posts may have been used for human sacrifice.[9]

Katu villages relocated by the Vietnamese Government were at first composed of small houses built on piles, with straw roofs and rattan sides.[10] Each family had its own house and kept livestock in the house. Later, longhouses were built, so that each family then had one to three rooms (depending on their number) for themselves. The entire village was arranged in the form of a horseshoe and overlooked a river. Each relocated village had an open area for rituals, with a ceremonial pole or tree for buffalo sacrifices.[11]

It may be noted that various other types of settlement patterns and houses may be found among the Katu, especially in more isolated or inaccessible areas. For instance, in a few villages of the Cao subgroup the communal house is located in the outer circle of regular houses rather than in the center. In still other areas, longhouses may be arranged in groups of two or four.

Some Katu houses built on small mounds of earth have been reported. These seldom have pilings, for the mound serves as the floor and as a place for fire.[12]

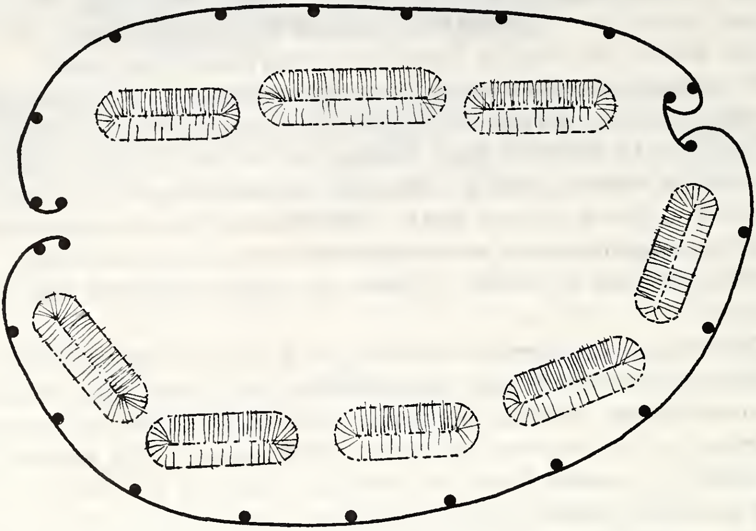


Figure 22. Layout of Cao village.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Though described as varying in body and facial type from the Negrito to the Indonesian to the American Apache, a typical Katu tribesman is 5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 6 inches tall, of stocky build, muscular, with very dark skin, black hair, and brown eyes.[1] They have little body hair and pluck their eyebrows into very thin lines.

Men and women are tattooed on the face, chest, arms, wrists, and above the knees. The most common tattoo designs are a dancing lady, found on the forehead; a sun motif, on the chest, forehead, or leg; and a cross, on the forehead. Other popular designs are geometric shapes or figures, a circle with a swastika inscribed, and triangles of three dots.[2] The thin lines of the eyebrows are extended by a series of tattooed black spots to below the ears.[3]

Health

The health of the Katu is generally poor, for they suffer from many endemic diseases. In the Katu area many diseases are insect-borne—by the anopheles mosquito, the rat flea, and the louse. Other diseases are associated with poor sanitary conditions, including poor sexual hygiene practices.[4]

Malaria is a common disease in the Katu area; most tribespeople have contracted it at least once in their lifetime. Two common types of malaria found in the Katu area are benign tertian malaria, which causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal; and malignant tertian malaria, which is fatal to both infants and adults.[5]

The three types of typhus in this region are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly especially common among the tribes.[6]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and smallpox are also common in the tribal areas. Dysentery and yaws are significant causes of infant mortality.[7] Parasitic infections and various fungus diseases are also prevalent.[8]

Associated with evil spirits, illness is treated by prayers and numerous spiritual cures. Some magic words spoken over animal entrails are thought to endow them with great healing powers. Sorcerers travel around the countryside selling lustral water supposedly efficacious against all ailments.[9]

Psychological Characteristics

One of the most warlike Montagnard tribes, the Katu were never completely pacified by the French—even now it is believed that they engage in blood hunts,* attacking weaker or unsuspecting victims with much relish and bloodletting.[10] However, when their villages are attacked by large expeditions, they often do not fight; instead, they abandon their villages, bury their valuables, and flee into the forest, despite the fact they are attached to their villages and reluctant to leave even for a short period of time under normal circumstances.[11]

The Katu are, in spite of their warlike nature, hospitable and generous, though they tend to be vain and boastful.[12]

---

* See "Customs and Taboos," p. 361.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The social life of the Katu centers around the family and the village, rather than around tribe or clan. The family or household unit is the extended patriarchal type, headed by the eldest male, who is the family authority and owns all the family property. Residence is patrilocal: kin groups—married sons and their families—live in the house of the father. The household serves as the economic unit, and its members cultivate a field in common.[1] The village social unit is a collection of extended families.

In the patriarchal Katu society the female members have lower status than the males. A male is the undisputed head of the household and administers all punishments. Women walk behind men, often carrying heavy burdens such as a load of wood while the men carry only a crossbow.[2] Family goods are passed from male to male according to seniority. The eldest son inherits the bulk of the family property, and the other sons divide the remainder. The family goods usually consist of buffaloes, stored paddy, jars, and gongs.[3]

The Katu language suggests a certain class distinction within the society, as do many Mon-Khmer languages.[4] Well-to-do persons or those in places of authority use the article "a" when speaking of an inferior person or object. The article "a" denotes a person or object inferior to the speaker: thus, a dog is called "a ca" by the well-to-do. The ordinary tribesmen do not use such an article; this difference makes it possible to distinguish between classes by their speech.[5]

Marriage

In the Katu society, the male selects his future wife from his own or neighboring villages. When he informs his father of his choice, a family conference is held around the fireplace the following evening, and everyone gives his views. The girl's family and estimates of the probable bride price are discussed, and the intermediary is selected.

At a suitable time—frequently at full moon—the intermediary will visit the girl's parents, already alerted by village gossip. After sharing a meal, the intermediary will discuss the bride price (usually gongs, pots, jars, a buffalo, and cloth) with the girl's family.

A young man who has participated in a successful blood hunt is considered a particularly desirable husband.

When the bride price is agreed upon, the spirits are consulted to see whether they agree to the marriage. First some prayers are said. Then the intermediary takes a cock and with one slice cuts off its right foot. The omen is determined by the way the claw contracts: if the main spur of the claw lies between the two others, the ancestors approve; if the spurs touch, the ancestors disapprove.[6]

Premarital sexual relations between engaged couples are common. A boy who has already engaged in a blood hunt and is strong and handsome is considered irresistible by the bride-to-be. Should they be discovered making love, the boy's family must pay the girl's village a sacrificial fine—customarily a pig or buffalo—which is eaten by the men in a communal house feast, to the accompaniment of much teasing of the clumsy lovers. If the boy's family is too poor to pay the fine, the girl will go to live with the boy, who is now under obligation to assist her parents whenever required.

If a Katu girl becomes pregnant before her wedding, she and her lover are sent into the forest for 6 days while the parents agree on a fine to be paid to the village by the boy's family. When the fine is paid, the girl and her lover are considered married, though no wedding celebration is held.[7]

Polygamy is permitted but is rare because of the expense of keeping more than one wife.[8]

Adultery and Divorce

Adultery, under specific conditions, is ground for divorce among the Katu. If the cause for divorce is adultery by the wife, all of the bride price is forfeited, and her extramarital partner is punished by being struck on the forehead by the offended husband and is fined two buffaloes, one for the village and one for the husband. When the guilty man wishes to keep the wife, he is required to obtain the consent of her husband and to reimburse the husband's family for the original bride price. In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father.[9]

Should the adulterer be a member of the family—uncle, cousin, brother-in-law—he is fined a pig to be eaten by the entire family. The Katu do not severely punish incest and sexual deviation.[10]

Birth

A pregnant woman works until the day of her child's delivery. It is not uncommon to see a woman in the ninth month of her pregnancy carrying a log on her back.[11]

As soon as labor pains start, the house of a pregnant woman becomes taboo or *dien* to everyone except the old village midwife.

Combining physical care with incantations, the midwife will remain with her charge for 3 days following delivery, leaving only once, to bury the afterbirth in the mountains.[12] Reportedly the midwife may assist only in the woman's first birth; the mother then delivers all subsequent children unaided.[13]

In the meantime, the men of the family assemble in the communal house, awaiting the news; when it arrives, the new father provides an animal, usually a pig, to be sacrificed and eaten. When a woman dies in childbirth, it is thought that she becomes an evil spirit, thus necessitating propitiatory sacrifices and temporary abandonment of the village. Appeasement of the evil spirit may include a blood hunt.[14]

Although the mother resumes work the day after birth, she nurses her infant until her milk supply is completely exhausted. In addition, as soon as the baby can eat solid food, he is given some rice, mashed manioc, or corn and cooked herbs. Infant mortality is high, but only after an infant has survived his seventh day can his death be called an "evil death," requiring offerings to the evil spirit.[15]

Childhood

Until he or she can walk, a Katu infant is carried on the mother's back—even during her most laborious chores. When a boy can walk, he will spend his days around the house under his brothers' supervision. He sleeps in a small bamboo cradle near the fireplace. Later he is allowed to wander on the village square. When he is older, he will be assigned to tend the buffaloes and will be allowed to visit the communal house, where the old men will teach him legends, songs, how to trap wild animals, and the art of sculpturing. Children are disciplined only by voice, never by hand or beating.[16] At 17 years of age the Katu boy is allowed to sleep in the communal house and is considered an adult.

The life of a Katu girl is similar; however, instead of tending buffaloes, she attends to the needs of the household and learns the housekeeping skills that will be required of her as an adult.[17]

Death and Burial

The Katu have two types of burial ceremonies: one for a natural death, and one for an evil or violent death.* In the event of a natural death, the corpse is placed in a coffin made from a tree trunk cut down the middle with the halves closely fitted. These coffins are prepared in advance and are never brought into the village houses but are stored in natural caves until they are needed. For the burial, a grave about 9 feet deep is dug in the forest. The coffin is lowered into the grave with food and various objects of the deceased placed on the lid. The coffin is not covered with dirt but remains exposed so the soul may escape to return to its home, where it will protect the survivors.

---

* See "Religion," p. 364.

On the day a death occurs, a buffalo is killed at the sacrificial pole; in the case of a wealthy man, the Katu traditionally sacrificed as many as five or six buffaloes during a period of as many days. During the nights of these sacrifices, gongs and drums are beaten.

After a period of 1 or 2 years, the entire family and all friends of the deceased gather again, and, to the reciting of prayers and playing of drums and gongs, they remove the remains from the tree-trunk coffin, transferring them to another coffin—this one beautifully sculptured and decorated.

Then the sculptured coffin is placed in the family vault, built in the shape of a small house and supported by at least four poles on which rests a slanting or flat roof. The vault is open on the sides, well constructed of heavy wood (sometimes bamboo is used for the roof), and is ornately carved and covered with decorations.

The coffin is placed with other family coffins in the vault. Libations and prayers are offered for the soul of the dead to rejoice in the company of his ancestors. If his family remembers the deceased with sacrifices, his spirit will regard them with benevolence. The Katu believe that if the departed soul has not been propitiated with sacrifices, he will cause his family to suffer nightmares.[18]

If a death is "bad," the family of the deceased must bury the corpse in the deepest corner of the forest, far away from the village. They must abandon their house, field, and village, live in the forest temporarily, and kill the animals that belonged to the deceased.

An extremely "bad" death, such as being devoured by a tiger, involves stringent taboos and necessitates the permanent abandonment of a village. Traditionally all village animals, including the dogs, were put to death, but this is apparently not the custom at present. The villagers live in the forest; while the taboo lasts—often a matter of 6 months—they may eat no buffalo meat nor build a house. Afterwards a new village is built at a different location.[19]

Wooden statues are placed at the doors of the new houses, around the village communal house, and on familiar trails to frighten away the evil spirit resulting from the bad death. The statues have various shapes: grotesque human figures with huge faces, squatting figures with chin resting on knees and head between hands, pipe smokers, and dancing women.[20]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Dress

Ordinarily, Katu men wear a long blanket of blue cotton around their chests and shoulders and a loincloth sometimes trimmed with small lead rings. In the past, these garments were often made by the Ataouat, a subgroup of the Katu. Now most cloth is obtained in trade with the ethnic Vietnamese. Some Katu wear a garment resembling a coat of mail, made of cloth with iron rings interlaced through the cloth. Katu women also wear the loincloth, but more frequently they wear a blue cloth which comes up to the breasts; some women, however, have also adopted a vestlike upper garment. Both men and women go barefooted.[1]

Beads are a very important part of Katu dress. The men wear chokers of yellow, white, and reddish-orange beads. The women wear both chokers and necklaces of loose strings of beads—sometimes as many as 30 to 40 strings. Katu men and women wear long necklaces of large black and white beads with tigers teeth and claws and the beaks of the hornbill bird strung among the beads.[2] The tribeswomen sometimes wear brass rings around or just below the waist.[3]

Hair styles among the Katu vary. Some Katu wear their hair in bangs; others, in a chignon held in place with a copper comb or a hog's tusk 5 or 6 inches long. Hogs teeth are highly prized as combs, and hogs are sometimes carefully fed for 6 or 7 years until their teeth are long enough for use as hair ornaments.[4] Still other Katu wear bamboo rings decorated with buttons on their heads. The women often wear sprays of bamboo in their hair. Katu women consider everything that glitters potential jewelry.[5]

Folk Beliefs

Since the world of the Katu is inhabited by innumerable spirits, many of them evil, the Katu have recourse to thousands of superstitious practices, which may be divided into two main classes: omens and taboos.

Omens exist in countless numbers as dreams or signs, supposedly warnings from good spirits that danger is near. Some of these signs are listed below.

Cock crowing at midnight.

Toucan flying toward the sun.

Sighting a python.

Finding certain types of plants in the forest.

Sneezing when one is about to undertake some important business.[6]

Incantations and invocations are addressed to ancestors to prevent the foreboded misfortune. Amulets are worn as protection against evil spirits.

Villages, houses, or fields may be deemed taboo or dien. When a village is taboo, no one may leave it, nor are any strangers allowed to enter. A dien is shown by placing a tree or branch at all places where paths lead into the village.[7] To satisfy the ancestors, a dien always requires a sacrifice of a pig, buffalo, or cock. Some representative diens are listed here.

House in which a woman is having a baby—3-day dien.

Before undertaking a serious matter, such as selling the harvest, the village is dien for 1 day.

Festivals of spring sowing and harvesting—the village is dien for 1 or 2 days.

Before starting a blood hunt—1 day dien for a village.

An evil death—village dien for 1 to 6 months.[8]

The Katu Blood Hunt

The Katu occasionally engage in a blood hunt, a ceremony during which human blood must be shed as a last resort to appease angry spirits.[9] The decision to undertake a blood hunt generally rests with the council of elders. After drinking fermented rice wine and invoking the ancestors, the oldest village male cuts off a cock's claw. While drums beat, children shout to the souls of the dead. If the omen is favorable, the Katu look for a victim; if no victim can be found, the cock is examined for more guidance. The signs may reveal a directive such as, "For 2 days you shall march towards the rising sun and on the morning of the 3rd, shed the redeeming blood."

At dawn, after talking, boasting, drinking, and singing all night, Katu warriors leave the village armed with spears, bows, and poisoned arrows. After an all-day march the hunters ambush their victims, members of another village or another tribe, finishing them off by spear point. To satisfy the spirits blood must be spilled, so each hunter stabs his victim many times. The victim's corpse is abandoned on the spot, unstripped, for theft would nullify the ritual of the spilling of blood. For a perfect ceremony, the hunters must dip their hands in the blood and smear it on their faces.

The triumphant, boasting hunters return to the communal house for a ritual animal sacrifice and several nights of feasting, with chanting and beating of gongs and drums to communicate the great success to the ancestors.[10]

Music and Art

Music, particularly simple songs, plays an important role in the lives of the Katu tribespeople. As an infant, the Katu is lulled to sleep by songs; as a child, he sings while he guards the buffalo or while he roams the forest in search of beehives. Later when he goes wooing he improvises courting songs, and the girl mocks him if his song is feeble. Still later he sings while hunting, working in the forest, or dancing around a buffalo tied to the sacrificial stake. By song he praises his own courage before leaving for a blood hunt, and by song he mourns his dead. Katu songs are often accompanied by a bamboo flute of three or four notes, or more frequently by tambourines.

Particular singers are famous throughout a large area: the village of Pa-San, for instance, has some renowned bards.[11] Such famous singers are invited to important festivities, often at distant villages. Singers are given the privilege of drinking from the best jar of wine to stimulate their inspiration.

The Katu are noted woodcarvers, possibly the most accomplished craftsmen in Indochina. Their caskets *(taram)*, tombs (*pin*), statues, sacrificial posts, and houses are works of art adorned with an infinite variety of designs, often in the shape of animals and geometric figures, each expressing the personality of its designer.[12]

Eating and Drinking Customs

The Katu normally eat two meals a day, one very early in the morning and one at bedtime. Their staple food is rice, though they also eat corn and manioc. In some regions the Katu drink a palm wine called *barac*. In other areas they make a wine for special occasions only by fermenting rice, manioc, or even maize in jars.[13]

Customs Relating to Animals

Animals are very important in the Katu religion. The buffalo is an especially sacred animal; a buffalo is never sold because it belongs to the ancestors, not to an individual or a village. Buffalo meat is never eaten merely to satisfy the appetite, but only at ritual ceremonies involving sacrifice.[14] The skulls of sacrificed buffaloes are kept in the communal house. It is thought that the presence of buffalo skulls promotes the fertility of the land and prosperity of the village. According to Katu belief, animals have a soul; thus the buffalo's soul stays near the communal house where its skull is hung. In addition to buffalo skulls, the skulls and tails of wild animals are hung in the communal house.[15]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The Katu have a large pantheon of good and evil spirits they believe intervene in their daily lives. Without the aid of the good spirits the tribesmen feel they have no protection from misfortunes brought by the evil spirits. However, even the good spirits withhold their protection if the actions of the tribesmen annoy them: when a village is ravaged by disease or when a harvest is lost, the Katu believe the good spirits are angry and must be appeased by a blood sacrifice.

The Katu believe that every person has two souls, a good one and a bad one. The manner of death determines the spirit form in which a person's soul will survive. A "good death," resulting from natural causes, brings a good spirit; a "bad death," resulting from violence, disease, or occurring during childbirth or in a place far from home, brings a bad spirit.[1] The souls of those who die a good death watch over their descendants, protecting them from danger in the forest by warning them when evil spirits are nearby. Warning signs include: peacock eggs in a path; a large tree uprooted across a trail; and the call, from the left side of the path, of a bird nesting in reeds. The evil spirits also have visible forms such as a tiger, a cobra hissing in the afternoon, and the flood waters causing a person to drown.[2]

Tattoos probably have religious significance for the tribespeople. The dancing girl tattoo reportedly represents the materialization of the spirit of man. When a tribesman is awake and in good health, the tattooed girl in the middle of the man's forehead acts as a guardian angel, lighting his intelligence and acting upon his will so that he will embark only on successful enterprises.[3]

Religious Ceremonies

Except for marriage and death feasts, almost all recurring Katu religious ceremonies and festivals occur according to the agricultural cycle: when bamboo sprouts begin to appear; when fields are cleared; and when rice is sown and harvested. When a new communal house is built, a great village feast is also held. Many other feasts, particularly those to placate the spirits, occur at frequent but unpredictable intervals. Every Katu ceremony involves dancing, invocations, heavy drinking, and much eating. On particular occasions a buffalo is sacrificed; only at these special festive ceremonies are the fermented wines drunk from their jars.[4]

Religious ceremonies connected with certain occurrences in the life cycle or with particular customs are discussed elsewhere in this study.*

Religious Practitioners

Although information about them is vague and evasive, sorcerers are reportedly common in Katu villages. A sorcercer inspects the claws of the cock to determine the advisability of an intended wedding or of an anticipated blood hunt. The sorcerers point out sacred places which are taboo and which the Katu may not disturb.

Wandering sorcerers, some from Laos, and certain tribesmen considered by the Katu to be very powerful travel the Katu territory, selling lustral water and amulets supposedly effective in warding off all ills.[5]

Apparently anyone may become a great sorcerer by causing an unusual event. Le Pichon, an early observer, recounts how he gained a reputation as a great sorcerer by using a charge of dynamite to put to flight some formidable spirits who were haunting a small river inlet.[6]

Missionary Contacts

The Christian and Missionary Alliance established a mission in the Katu area in 1941. Prior to this time, missionaries attempting to work among the Katu had been either driven away or killed. The Christian and Missionary Alliance claims its missionaries have converted over 250 tribesmen to Christianity. This organization also asserts that there are several all-Christian villages among the lowland Katu.[7]

---

* See "Health," p. 355 ; "Blood Hunt," p. 362.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Katu have a subsistence economy and are dependent upon agriculture for the bulk of their food. Upland rice, manioc, and corn are grown by slash-and-burn cultivation. Under this agricultural technique, a plot is farmed for a given period of time. When fertility declines, the land is allowed to lie fallow to regain its natural vegetation and nutrients. Meanwhile the Katu move to other fields, returning to the original, overgrown plots at a later time. A field may be used for 3 or 4 successive years depending on its fertility. These fields are not always close to the village—sometimes they are as far away as a full day's travel, due to the exhaustion of nearby soils. After exhausting all possible sites in the vicinity of the village, the Katu then move their village to fresh available land. Presumably such moves occur every few decades.

Early in the dry season or late in the wet season, the trees—except for the largest—are felled. The dense floor vegetation is cut to the ground and allowed to become sun-dried before the next burning time—usually a month before the heavy rains begin. Then the field is burned carefully to prevent the fire from spreading. After the burned field has cooled, the family clears the debris, leaving only boulders and stumps. The layer of fine ash from the burned vegetation is subsequently washed into the soil by the rains. Then, until the harvesting, the only attention given the land is the planting and some weeding during the growing season. When the first rains loosen the soil, the planting begins. The men make holes for the seed rice with dibbles, and the women follow, planting and covering the seeds. Usually harvesting occurs at the end of the rainy season.

New sites and locations for the fields are chosen by the chief, generally in consultation with village elders and the sorcerer, according to rules and interpretation of traditional signs. The vegetation is inspected to determine the prevailing soil conditions. Certain divinations also are regarded as signs showing the potential of the land.

The Katu supplement their basic diet of rice by hunting and collecting edible jungle plants. Hunting provides the bulk of the meat diet, as the Katu are skilled hunters using the trap, the crossbow (sometimes with poisoned arrows), imitative calls to attract birds, and hunting dogs.[1]

Katu women roam over large areas collecting herbs, roots, shoots, and edible leaves, fruits, and tubers. They use a sharp stick or small hoe to dig the earth for the roots and tubers. With the help of dogs, the women catch lizards, rats, snakes, squirrels, and birds.

The Katu also have small kitchen gardens near the village where they grow various secondary crops, such as vegetables and tobacco.[2]

Special Arts and Skills

In addition to agriculture, food collecting in the forest, and hunting, another basic Katu occupation is craftwork for which the tools are very simple, even crude.

In every village, basketmaking is the chief craft. Katu baskets, made of very thin strips of rattan, are very well designed and executed.

Bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood are the materials used for making receptacles, matting, light walls, traps, containers (for water, salt, and tobacco), pipes, nets, and weapons.

The women weave coarse, colorful cloth of cotton, using a light weaving loom made of several pieces of wood, usually with four sets of thread. The fiber providing the thread for the weaving is no longer grown locally and is presently obtained in trade from the ethnic Vietnamese.

The Katu are especially adept at woodcarving. Reportedly they are the most accomplished woodcarvers in Indochina—a contention substantiated by the carved ornamentation of their houses, tombs, and sacrificial poles. The Ataouat are particularly renowned as artisans. In contrast to other Katu subgroups, the Ataouat make pottery, iron lance tips, jewelry, and blankets.[3]

Another subgroup, the Ngung Bo, is reportedly skilled in tanning buffalo skins.

Exchange System and Trade

Although the Katu have recently begun to use a monetary system, they still largely depend upon barter. Even now, prices are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, jars, gongs, weapons, cotton cloth, and other objects considered valuable.

Vietnamese traders enter Katu country to buy and sell, and the Katu descend to Vietnamese towns for barter. The Katu purchase blankets, pots, salt, cotton goods, jars, glass beads, jewelry, necklaces, and iron for their spears. In return, they trade wood, betel leaves, medicinal roots, and tree bark from the forest, as well as fruits, corn, and glutinous rice.[4] Other Katu groups also frequently barter with the Ataouat for pottery, spear tips, jewelry, and blankets.[5]

Tribesmen of the Ngung Bo subgroups sell live buffaloes and buffalo hides to the Vietnamese, and the Thap subgroup has a highly lucrative trade in betel leaves with the Vietnamese.[6]

Each Katu family usually does its own trading. Large transactions, however, are often undertaken in public for the purpose of having witnesses; but some dealings with Vietnamese merchants are handled privately by the village chief.

Trading for the Katu is a form of entertainment, involving long discussions. When the arrangements are made for a large transaction, the village chief bends small pieces of bamboo into as many sections as days remain for the actual exchange to take place. When the day arrives, the Vietnamese trader will meet the Katu at the appointed place designated for trading. The Katu will not disappoint him; on time, they arrive in long lines, men and women carrying their produce in baskets. In the evening when the trading is finished, they return to their village with their newly acquired goods.[7]

Property System

Among the Katu, land ownership is an unknown concept. Although the fields do not belong to the cultivators, the crop is the property of the one who has worked the land. The first cultivator of a particular field has unwritten title to the use of that plot; only if the first cultivator does not wish to use the field, may another tribesman do so. Communal lands, or lands held and administered by the village, do not exist.[8]

Distribution of Wealth

Distinction by wealth prevails among the Katu. Usually, this is indicated by the tribesman's house, which may be larger, better built, or more ornately carved. Other signs of wealth are personal ornamentation and ownership of gongs, jars, and buffaloes.

The well-to-do have servants, usually orphans who work and live with the family, receiving no pay. However, when the servants come of age, the master must sponsor their marriage. Then the servants are free to depart to set up their own household or to remain in the service of their former master, who then pays for their labor by feeding them and giving them a portion of the harvest.

A poor man and his family may become servants by entering into a verbal service contract. They live in the master's house and exchange labor for a fixed return, usually their sustenance, a buffalo per annum, and one-third of the yearly crop. When differences occur between the parties of the contract, the master gives the servants only half their pay, and they are free to leave.[9]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The only political unit the Katu are known to have is the village, which is governed by a chief and a council of elders—with the elders having the dominant influence.

The village chief or *ta-ka* is selected by the elders, who choose the cleverest man of the village, preferably one who has led a successful blood hunt or who has made a favorable trading transaction for the tribe. If misfortune, such as a poor harvest, death, or epidemic, befalls the village, the chief is likely to be held responsible and to be replaced by the elders. Ordinarily the former chief bows out gracefully, for the Katu believe this is what the ancestors would want him to do.[1]

The chief and elders have jurisdiction over disputes between families or with other villages, while disputes within a family are judged by the male head of the household.[2]

Officially, the Vietnamese Government administers relationships between tribal villages and assigns officials to be responsible for small groups of tribal villages. Above this level are district and provincial chiefs. Through this hierarchy the Vietnamese Government administers tribal affairs and transmits its orders to the village level.[3]

However, the extent of Government control over the Katu is limited because most of the Katu area is under Viet Cong control.[4] Even before the Viet Cong established control over their area, the Katu had minimal relations with the Central Government. It may be noted that not until 1935 did the French open up the Katu area and establish six guard posts there. The difficulty of travel in the Katu area enabled the tribespeople to live in isolation and maintain only minimal contact with the Government.[5]

Legal System

Justice is usually administered by the village chief with the advice of the elders. Generally the plaintiff will accept the decision of the council; if he does not, he will abandon his house, move to another village, and start over again.

The most common cases handled by the village council include family quarrels, marriage conflicts, and adultery. The verdicts for such cases always result in an indemnity for the victim and a penalty fine of a cock, pig, or buffalo. Although within the village thefts are very rare, they occur frequently between villages and lead to interminable intervillage conflict.

If a tribesman accused of murder cannot absolve himself, he is judged to be guilty; he is usually sentenced to pay a large fine to the parents of the victim—generally a sacrifice of 10 to 20 buffaloes. Murderers usually cannot pay this high price, and if the fine is not paid, the family of the murdered person has the right to kill the murderer with spear thrusts. If the murderer is from another village, the determination of punishment is no longer a family matter: it then becomes the responsibility of the murdered man's village. Invariably a war expedition results, for failure to avenge blood by blood brings dishonor upon the village. Until the dishonor has been wiped out, none of the villagers may eat buffalo or appear in public.[6]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences, which could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction to handle only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[7]

Under the French, cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. To judge the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[8] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief; however, provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices in an effort to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[9]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[10] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved, thus eliminating the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[11]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[12]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[13]

Subversive Influences

The principal objective of subversive activity among the Katu is to alienate the tribesmen from the Vietnamese Government. Another important objective in the Katu area is to control and to maintain supply lines though the tribal area. In 1965, the Viet Cong reportedly controlled almost all of the Katu area.[14]

As a rule, subversive elements infiltrate a tribal village and attempt to win the confidence of the village as a whole or of its key individuals. A thorough knowledge of tribal customs aids the Viet Cong—for example, their agents adopt Katu dress to identify themselves with the tribespeople.

Once the villagers' suspicions have been allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong begin an intense propaganda program directed against the Central Government. Individuals are then recruited, trained, and used for various support or combat missions with the Viet Cong.

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong will resort to extortion and terror. The Katu may be coerced into passive support, such as refusing cooperation with the Central Government, or the villagers may be pressed into active support for the Viet Cong as laborers.[15]

After the Geneva Agreement of 1954, a number of the Katu were taken to North Vietnam, where they received indoctrination and guerrilla training. It is believed these trained tribesmen have since assumed important positions in villages throughout the Katu area.[16]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Katu area is by word of mouth. The Katu do not have radios. Any radios in the tribal area presumably have been brought in by outsiders for military use.

The Katu are not likely to be receptive to motion pictures, due to their belief that the soul of a man whose image is captured in the form of a photograph is lost, bringing misfortune to the area.[1] Written communication will likewise have little effect on the Katu, as they presently have no written language. The few Katu who read Vietnamese or French could, however, be expected to share information contained in written communications with their illiterate neighbors.

All information directed to the Katu should be based upon projects and programs beneficial to the village, as the tribesmen have a strong communal attachment. Should the tribesmen believe that a particular program is not explicitly for Katu benefit, they will not cooperate. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against Viet Cong harassment are possible themes for information programs.

Any unusual act to persuade the tribesmen to believe a person has supernatural powers may be a useful information technique. As mentioned earlier, a Frenchman reportedly gained the respect of the Katu by setting off a dynamite charge: the tribesmen believed he was a great sorcerer and had put to flight some formidable spirits which had been haunting a small river inlet.[2]

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Katu religious, social, and cultural traditions. All initial contacts should be made with the village chief and the elders because of the Katu political structure. It is also essential to psychologically prepare the Katu to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to result, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village-oriented, the Katu respond favorably to ideas for change when they are presented in terms of community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained; the Katu resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs being conducted by the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of the Katu into new and larger villages, the control of malaria and other medical programs, agricultural assistance, and an educational program. These programs have not been notably successful, because of the isolation of the tribesmen, their disinclination to change their traditional ways, and Viet Cong activity in the area.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.

5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Katu encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
   b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
   e. Insect and rodent control.
   f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   c. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   a. Improve village sanitation.
   b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
   c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   a. Provide basic literacy training.
   b. Provide basic citizenship education.
   c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Katu can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen may be used as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Katu can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership, they can be organized into effective counterguerrilla combat units.

Under threat of terror and reprisals, the Katu have been forced to give the Viet Cong support in the form of food, taxes, and labor. When tactics of subversion, propaganda, and simple cajolery fail to subdue the Katu, the Viet Cong resort to murder and brutality.

Frequently, the Katu yield to and cooperate with the Viet Cong. The isolated Katu do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong; they need Government training and support. Most Katu villages have no organization for defense that is effective against modern weapons, except for the few villages equipped, trained, and organized by the Government. Katu villages with adequate training and support will defend themselves and will occasionally initiate aggressive action against the Viet Cong.

Organization for Defense

Traditionally, the Katu village has been organized for defense against surprise attack: the village site was chosen for inaccessibility, and the villages were formerly surrounded by a stockade, with sharpened bamboo stakes and traps placed along access trails. Furthermore, bamboo tubes filled with poisoned water were left near their fields to be drunk by the intruder.[1]

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

Traditional weapons of the Katu are spears, swords, crossbows, and poisoned arrows. The poison used on the arrows is a form of curare poison made from plants of the genus *strychnos*. The Katu are familiar with the use of traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks used as spiked foot traps.

Their relatively small stature limits the weapons the Katu can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the

AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning Automatic Rifle, although they can handle large weapons which can be disassembled and quickly reassembled.

The Katu pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Katu can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Katu seem unable to handle sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, as proficiently as they handle hand weapons. They have difficulty absorbing the more abstract and technical aspects—such as timing trajectories—of such weapons.

Willingness to Fight

In warfare on their own terms, the Katu are quite willing, often even anxious, to initiate offensive action. Their traditional blood hunts, during which warriors often traveled considerable distances to attack neighboring villages, may contribute to their willingness to fight offensively. However, the Katu are reluctant to fight unless they enjoy a clear superiority either in numbers or weaponry. They favor night attacks and fighting from ambush. The Katu defend their villages unless attacked by a vastly superior force; in that event they will take refuge in the forest.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Katu can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities: they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Katu learn techniques and procedures more readily from actual demonstrations using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations: such an approach is too abstract for them.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE KATU

Every action of the Katu tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Katu may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple coure of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Katu are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Katu village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Katu. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Katu tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. No immediate, important decision should be asked of a Katu. An opportunity for family consultation should always be provided; if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
7. Tribal elders and the village chief should also receive credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Katu should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse a Katu offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. The Katu are great boasters and may talk of the hundreds of men they have killed. An outsider should accept these boasts and echo them.
5. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the Katu.
6. Outsiders must request permission to attend a Katu ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
7. An outsider should never enter a Katu house, unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
8. Outside personnel should avoid taking pictures of the tribesmen, for the Katu believe that they will "lose their spirit" if photographed, as the soul will thus be captured on the piece of paper.[1]
9. Outsiders should not get involved with Katu women.
10. Generally, Katu are eager to learn; however, teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Katu believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.

3. Do not mock Katu religious beliefs in any way: these beliefs are the cornerstone of Katu life.
4. The wooden Katu statues, placed on trails or near village structures, can be examined by an outsider, but a stranger should not touch the statues. If it is necessary to move a statue, arrangements should be made with the villagers.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Katu property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Katu language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribesmen.

Health and Welfare

1. The Katu are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Katu areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. J. Le Pichon, "Les Chasseurs de sang," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hue*, XXV (1938), pp. 359–61.
2. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 141.
3. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIV (Winter 1961), p. 13.
4. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 359–61.
5. *Ibid.;* LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
6. Sgt. Yosich, Returnee Interview (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964).
7. J. Hoffett, "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique: Entre Tourane et les Boloven," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Géographie*, LIX (1933), pp. 1–43.
8. Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, August 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. Hoffett, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 20–21, 28; David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), pp. 1–5.
3. Yosich, *op. cit.*
4. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1046–47.
5. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 357–58.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 365–73; LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
7. Yosich, *op. cit.*
8. Laura Irene Smith, *Victory in Viet Nam* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), p. 23; LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
9. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 370.
10. Yosich, *op. cit.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Hoffett, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 363; Yosich, *op. cit.*
2. Louis Bezacier, "Notes sur quelquès tatouages des Moi katu,"

Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme, V (1942), pp. 117–25.
3. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*
4. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 109–31.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–14.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–18.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–24; Norman Lewis, *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), p. 113.
9. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 391–93.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 366.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 378.
2. Yosich, *op. cit.*
3. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 378.
4. *Ibid.*; Kopf, *op. cit.*
5. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 378.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 376–77.
7. *Ibid.*
8. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 141–42.
9. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 377.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Yosich, *op. cit.*
12. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 376–77.
13. Yosich, *op. cit.*
14. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 387.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 384.
16. Yosich, *op. cit.*
17. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 376.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 386.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 395–97.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 369–72.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 364–66.
2. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
3. Yosich, *op. cit.*
4. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 364–66.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
7. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
8. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 396.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 385–87.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 391–92.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 381–84.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 394.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

VI. RELIGION

1. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

2. *Ibid.*
3. Louis Bezacier, "Interpretation du tatouage frontal des Moi ka-tu," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), p. 40.
4. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 399.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 395–97.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 367.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 362–67.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 364.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Hoffett, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
7. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 378–79.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 376–79.
2. Yosich, *op. cit.;* Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 376–77.
3. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), pp. 1–4.
4. Yosich, *op. cit.*
5. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 357–58.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
7. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
8. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
9. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation," *op. cit.*, p. 1.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
13. *Ibid.*
14. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition, 1965), pp. 138–39.
15. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.
16. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.*, pp. 138–39.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
2. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 395–96.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Le Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE KATU

1. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bezacier, Louis. "Interprétation du tatouage frontal des Moi ka-tu," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), 39–51.

———. "Notes sur quelques tatouages des Moi katu," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, V (1942), 117–25.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War*. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Cadière. Leopold Michel. "Notes sur les Moi du Quang-Tri (Ka-Lo)," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, III (1940), 101–17.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie*, Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.) *Indo-China*. Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "L'Aspect du temps et les météores dans une tribu de Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française de'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 213–21.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. "Comments on Y Bham's Address—15 March 1965." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, March 24, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands*. Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA/R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau*. Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Hoffett, J. "Les Mois de la Chaine Annamitique: Entre Tourane et les Boloven," *Terre, Air, Mer: La Geographie*, LIX (1933), 1–43.

Josephsen, Leroy. "Starting Out," *Jungle Frontiers*, XII (Winter 1960), 3.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. August 1965. [Ph.D candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

LeBar, Frank M., *et. al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Le Pichon, J. "Les Chasseurs de sang," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hue*, XXV (1938), 357–409.

Levy, Paul. "Le Sacrifice du buffle et la prédiction du temps à Vientiane," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, VI (1943), 301–31.

Lewis, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

———. *Les Regions Moi dn Sud Īndo-Chinois.* Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909.

Mangham, Evelyn. "Superstitions," *Jungle Frontiers*, XI (Summer 1960), 10.

Nhom Nghien Cuu Dan Toc (Cua Uy-Ban Dan-Toc) [Minority Peoples' Study Group (of the Committee of Minority Peoples)]. *Cac Dan Toc Thieu So O Viet-Nam* [*Minority Peoples of Vietnam*]. Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Van Hoa, 1959.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIV (Winter 1961), 13.

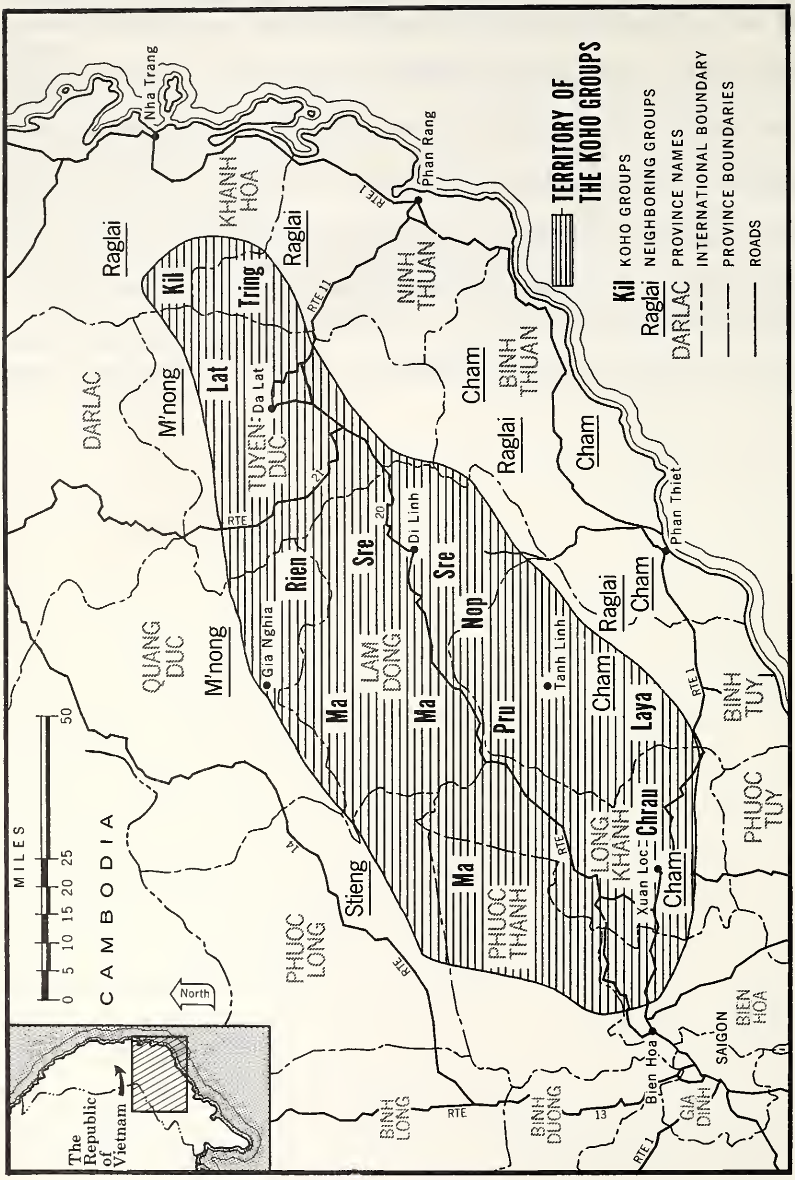
Smith, Gordon Hedderly. *The Blood Hunters.* Chicago: World Wide Prayer and Missionary Alliance, 1942.

Smith, Laura Irene. *Victory in Viet Nam.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition, 1965.

Yosich, Sgt. Returnee Interview. Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964.


TERRITORY OF THE KOHO GROUPS
Kil KOHO GROUPS
Raglai NEIGHBORING GROUPS
DARLAC PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
CAMBODIA
North
The Republic of Vietnam
Nha Trang
Phan Rang
Phan Thiet
Da Lat
Di Linh
Gia Nghia
Tanh Linh
Xuan Loc
Bien Hoa
SAIGON
RTE 1
RTE 11
RTE 21
RTE 20
RTE 14
RTE 13
RTE
KHANH HOA
NINH THUAN
BINH THUAN
DARLAC
TUYEN DUC
LAM DONG
QUANG DUC
PHUOC LONG
PHUOC THANH
LONG KHANH
BINH TUY
PHUOC TUY
BIEN HOA
BINH LONG
BINH DUONG
GIA DINH
Kil
Tring
Lat
Rien
Sre
Sre
Nop
Ma
Ma
Ma
Pru
Laya
Chrau
Raglai
Raglai
Raglai
Raglai
M'nong
M'nong
Stieng
Cham
Cham
Cham
Cham
Cham

The Koho Groups

CHAPTER 10. THE KOHO

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Koho-speaking peoples, composed of several distinct groups —the Chrau, Kil, Lat, Laya, Ma,* Nop, Pru, Rien, Sre, and Tring— are one of the larger Montagnard groups of the Republic of Vietnam. The Koho inhabit an extensive mountainous area extending from Saigon in the south to Da Lat in the north. Despite their proximity to two major cities of the Republic of Vietnam, and despite the size of the area they inhabit, information concerning all of the Koho groups is meager.

The Koho language, spoken by all the groups with only minor variations, is Mon-Khmer in origin and is related to the languages of the Bahnar, Stieng, M'nong, and other important tribal groups. With the exception of the Ma, the Koho groups are matrilineal and live in village units of varying size. The village forms the highest permanent political organization attained by these groups.

Name and Size of Group

The Koho groups, also called Coho, Kohov, and Cohov, number approximately 90,000 persons.[1]

The Kil, also known as the Cil or Chil, call themselves Kou N'Ho (Children of the Pines).[2] The Laya are sometimes identified as Rion or Riong, but the Laya and the Rion or Rien are usually considered two separate groups. The Sre are also called Cau Sre, which means "People of the Rice."[3]

A North Vietnamese source reported a total of 10,000 for the Lat, Nop, Laya, Co Don (unknown affiliation) and To-La (unknown affiliation) combined.[4] Population figures are not available for the Chrau, Kil, Pru, and Rien groupings. The Ma number between 20,000 and 30,000 persons; the Sre, about 30,000.[5]

One Koho group, the Chrau, is believed to have several subgroups: Ro, Bajieng, Mru, Jre, Buham, Bu-Preng, and Bla.[6]

---

* Because the Ma is the one group which substantially diverges from the general Koho cultural pattern, a separate chapter in this volume treats the Ma group. See chapter 11, p. 437.

Location and Terrain Analysis of Tribal Area

The Koho territory extends from just north of Saigon to the area of Da Lat. In the northern part of the Koho area the Lang Bian Mountains rise to about 6,000 feet and overlook the Da Lat Plateau. Made up of rolling hills, the Da Lat Plateau is separated from the Bao Loc or Djiring Plateau by the wide alluvial valley of the Da Dung River. Northwest of the Bao Loc Plateau, near the great bend in the Da Dung River, there are sharp mountains rising as high as 4,500 feet. On both sides of the Da Dung River is *dang* terrain, consisting of steep ridges reaching a height of approximately 2,000 feet. A chain of mountain peaks 3,000 feet high lies south of the Djiring Plateau, reaching as far south as Saigon, and continuing to the area between the coast and the lower Da Dung River.

Much of the Koho land is covered with secondary forest growth, the result of reforestation of cleared land. This type of forest is abundant with vines and brush interlaced with a new growth of closely spaced trees. Such tangled thicket makes travel through these areas very difficult. The Sre, for example, live in U-shaped river valleys and are surrounded by secondary forest growth.[7]

In some areas of the Koho territory, the higher mountain ridges and peaks still retain a growth of primary rain forest, which has three levels. The highest level is a canopy formed by trees 75 to 90 feet high; some very old trees are 125-150 feet high and are especially venerated by tribesmen as the abode of spirits. The middle level has shorter trees and vines, while the lowest level consists of seedlings and saplings.[8] Northeast of Da Lat, in the area inhabited by the Kil, are pine forests.

The climate of the Koho area is affected by two monsoon winds, one coming from the southwest in the summer, May to mid-September, and the other from the northeast in the winter, November to March. Agriculture is greatly dependent on the summer monsoons, which brings up to 150 inches of annual rainfall. Temperatures in the Koho regions are at least 15 degrees lower at all times of the year than in the coastal regions. Da Lat, in the Koho area, was a French summer resort because of its cool mountain climate.[9]

National Route 14 passes slightly to the west of the Koho area, while Route 20 runs through the area across the Bao Loc Plateau from Saigon to Da Lat. Other roads link Di Linh with Gia Nghia, Phan Thiet with Di Linh, Phan Rang with Da Lat, and Duc Trong with Ban Me Thuot.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: The Malayo-Polynesian and the Mon-Khmer. In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Koho belong to the Mon-Khmer grouping. Indochina has been a migratory corridor from time immemorial, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the upper Mekong Valleys, whence they migrated through Indochina.[1] The Koho peoples are descendants of these ancient migrants and are related to the Stieng, Bahnar, and M'nong in terms of customs, language, and agricultural techniques.[2]

Language

The term Koho refers to a number of tribal groups, such as the Kil, Lat, Tring, Sre, Rien, and Nop, that have very closely related dialects. The dialects of the various groups called Koho peoples are so similar that communication is possible among them. Since no language barrier exists among the Koho, anthropologists use the linguistic term Koho as the generic name for all these tribes.

The various Koho dialects stem from the Bahnaric subgroup of the Mon-Khmer language stock and consist primarily of short monosyllabic words.

The Koho groups have no written form for their dialects, although phonetic dictionaries and textbooks of their dialects do exist, thanks to the work of the French and, more recently, American missionaries who lived among these peoples. In the 1950's, American missionaries reported some success in teaching a number of Koho, primarily among the Sre group, to read and write their own dialect; however, no detailed information is available concerning the number of Koho who have acquired literacy. One source states that most Koho are still virtually illiterate.[3]

Under French colonial rule, little contact was permitted between the Vietnamese and the various Montagnard groups; thus, few Koho reaching maturity during the colonial period can speak Vietnamese, although some do speak French. Koho knowledge of Vietnamese depends largely upon proximity: Koho in the south, or near the towns of Di Linh or Da Lat, probably have some knowledge of Vietnamese gained through trading or other contacts, although it is doubtful that many have achieved fluency. The more isolated Koho, seldom in contact with the Vietnamese, have little if any knowledge of the language.[4] Most Koho groups are mobile, and in their travels, either for hunting or trading, they have acquired an understanding of the languages of neighboring tribes, such as the Stieng and the M'nong.[5] The Kil, living within communities of other Koho groups, may be familiar with several of the Koho dialects; Kil men speak the dialect of the local area, but the women speak only their own dialect.*,[6] The dialects of some Koho groups are also understood by the neighboring Raglai.

Legendary History

The following legend of the Koho in the vicinity of Di Linh describes their origin. In the beginning of time, a bird (a kite) and a crab quarreled; the bird pierced the crab's shell with his beak. To revenge itself on the bird, who had flown away, the crab caused the oceans and rivers to swell to the sky. All the creatures of the earth perished in the water except for two humans—a man and a woman—who, accompanied by a pair of every animal and bird, took refuge in a wooden chest.

The flood lasted 7 days and 7 nights. Then the man and the woman heard a chicken clucking outside of the chest. Sent by the spirits (*yang*), the chicken told those in the chest that they could come out.

Soon the couple had no more rice and were on the verge of starvation, when they heard a sound from the earth: it was an ant holding in its mandibles a gift from the spirits, two grains of rice. The man, destined to become the grandfather of the Koho group, planted the grains, and the next day a crop of gigantic rice covered the plain.

Some years later, the grandfather drank rice wine and fell into a stupor. When his eldest son saw him asleep naked, he began to mock his father. A younger son reproached his brother and covered his father with a banana leaf.

The grandfather awoke; and learning what had happened, he took away his eldest son's clothes and chased him into the forest. This eldest son founded the race of Montagnards (the Koho included) who have no clothes. The old man's other two sons became the ancestors of the Annamese and the Laotians.[7]

---

* See "Economic Organization," p. 412.

Factual History

Specific information on the factual history of the Koho peoples is scanty. For centuries, more highly organized peoples, by pressure and exploitation, gradually pushed the Koho out of the lush coastal areas into the more rugged country they presently inhabit. Some groups, such as the isolated Kil, retreated into the high mountains to preserve their traditional independence. Others, such as the Sre, traded with, worked for, and occasionally intermarried with stronger neighbors like the Cham or Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese), although not to the extent of assimilation.[8]

Between the 11th and 15th centuries, the general area of the mountainous upper Donnai region and the rugged but lower and more fertile country surrounding Di Linh and Da Lat served as a bloody battleground in the wars between the Khmer and Cham peoples. The Cham, the Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese), and eventually the French all exerted their influence in the Koho area. In 1699, the Annamese brought troops and settlers into the Donnai Delta and began to encroach upon the southernmost groups of the Koho. During this period, the Annamese considered the Montagnards generally too savage to become subjects of the royal Annamese court at Hue. The Annamese were primarily interested in keeping the Koho tranquil and away from the good irrigated ricelands. A few Montagnards were allowed into Annamese territory to barter.[9]

In 1880, after the French pacification of the Koho area, a Frechman reported that Koho villagers were astounded when he paid for what he took and when he did not burn their village. He ascribed this as the reason for the Koho decision to ask the French governor in Saigon for help against the Annamese and for Koho willingness to trade with the French.[10]

Settlement Patterns

Koho settlement patterns vary according to the geographic location. The Koho groups of the low hills and plain country live in fairly permanent villages, while the nomadic inhabitants of the mountainous region of the upper Donnai River reside in isolated and generally temporary encampments.

The majority of the Koho peoples inhabit the lower, more fertile lands. Their villages are composed of several longhouses, 60 to 80 meters in length, which lodge several nuclear families. The houses built of bamboo are slightly elevated on numerous short piles. Bamboo balconies—entrance platforms—are built on the front of the house, and wide ladders, sometimes ornamented or sculptured, provide the only means of ascent. Entrance to the house is through two low doors. There are no windows or chimneys, so that smoke from the cooking fires remains in the longhouses.

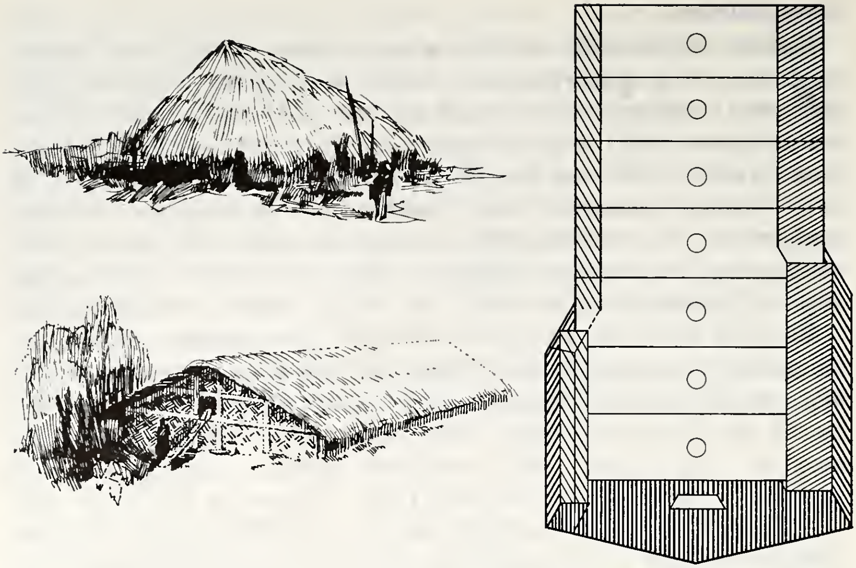


Figure 23. Typical Koho houses.

Normal furnishings consist of jars, baskets, and mats. Goats and pigs are sheltered under the house.[11]

The term village does not apply to the nomadic groups of the Koho, especially the Kil, because they live in temporary, often only one-house, encampments, frequently located considerable distances from each other. Their poor land, primitively cultivated, is quickly exhausted, requiring them to move frequently. The Kil are said to have the poorest and filthiest houses of any Montagnard group —reportedly sharing them with their goats and pigs.[12]

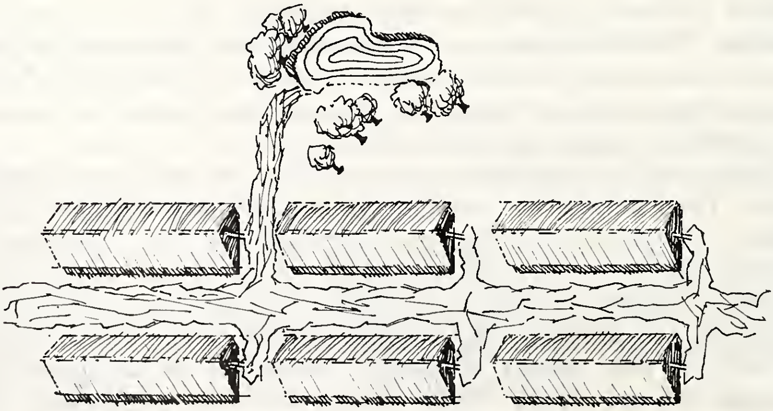
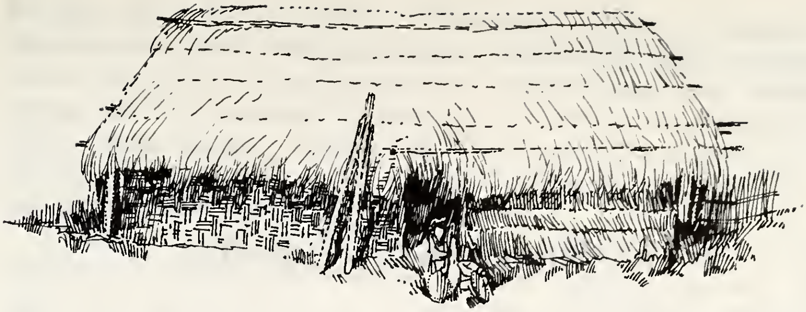
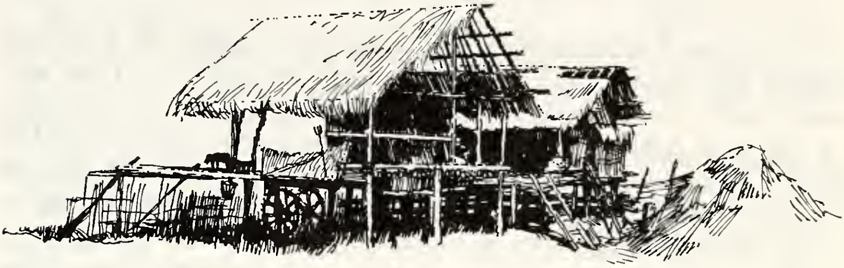


Figure 24. Layout of typical Koho village.



Lat house



Sre houses

Figure 25.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

In general, the Koho are short, sturdy people with smooth brown or reddish-brown skin. Their normal height ranges from 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 5 inches with an average weight of about 115 pounds for the adult male. Dwarfs or malformed individuals are reportedly rare.

Like other Montagnard groups, many Koho people file down the incisor and canine teeth of their children at puberty. They also wear their coarse, straight black hair coiled in a knot at the back of the head, with a crude wooden comb or hairpin inserted in the knot. Men and women stretch their earlobes by inserting various wooden or ivory plugs in them; in some extreme cases, the enormous earlobes hang down to the shoulders.[1]

The available information gave no indication that the Koho groups practice tattooing; however, some specific reports state the Sre do not use tattoos.[2] Neither do the Sre file their teeth or stretch their earlobes. Their women, however, do occasionally blacken their teeth with a substance extracted from various plants. The Sre have thick black or brown hair, frequently wavy and highlighted by tawny streaks. The Sre shift the customary hair knot from the back of the head to one side when carrying a basket on the head. The Mongolian spot (a bluish mark at the base of the spine) is common to the newborn babies of the Sre.[3]

Health

Many diseases in the Koho area are carried by insects, such as the anopheles mosquito, the rat flea, and the louse. Some diseases are caused by worms, other diseases result from poor sanitary conditions and bad sexual hygiene practices.[4]

Malaria is a common disease in the area, with most of the people having contracted it at least once in their lifetime. Two of the most common types of malaria in the area are the benign tertian malaria, causing high fever with relapses over a period of time, but usually not fatal, and the malignant tertian malaria, which is fatal to both infants and adults.[5]

Three types of typhus in the Republic of Vietnam are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly especially frequent among the tribes.[6] Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, and respiratory and skin diseases are common among the Koho peoples. Dysentery and yaws are responsible for many infant deaths.[7] Among the Koho, lepers are isolated in the forest and when they die an old man of the village buries them and burns their houses.[8]

A study of birth and death dates in one Koho village revealed that one-fifth of the adult women gave birth during the year; one-quarter of the children born to these women died within their first year. Despite the high infant mortality rate, the study indicated a slight annual population increase.[9]

Sanitary practices, at best primitive, are practically nonexistent. The Kil and Sre subgroups rarely wash their clothing or bathe, although they do swim in the rivers for pleasure.[10]

The Koho share with other highland groups the belief that evil spirits cause illnesses and that only properly invoked spirits can cure the sick. Yang Chi, the spirit of the waters, is the particular evil spirit attacking man and making him ill.

When a Koho is ill, a sorcerer (*be gio*) or a sorceress is called to determine the spirit to be invoked and the sacrifices necessary to restore health. Among the spirits called upon for cures are those of the earth, fire, forest, air, stone, or rice. The rice spirit is the most difficult to appease, requiring the sacrifice of a buffalo.

If after the invocation of a spirit the patient's condition does not improve, the process is repeated, and other spirits are summoned. When the patient's family is wealthy, spirit after spirit may be invoked until the repeated sacrifices have exhausted the family's wealth. A long illness can ruin a family: sometimes 20 or 30 sorcerers are used; and if the patient is cured each sorcerer receives a buffalo. However, if the patient dies the sorcerers must place items such as a blanket, belt, turban, bead necklace, or brass bracelet in the coffin with the deceased patient.[11] Reportedly a sorcerer may occasionally beat the patient to drive the evil spirit from his body.[12]

The Koho frequently run out of rice prior to the next harvest. Although they also grow corn, it is not highly esteemed as a food and Koho villagers will reportedly trade corn for rice during food shortages. How the periods of food scarcity affect the general health of the Koho is naturally contingent on the duration of the shortage; prolonged periods, due often to successive crop failures, result in malnutrition.[13]

The Koho seem to respond favorably to modern medical treatment. Koho who have had contact with outsiders recognize the superiority of Western medical techniques and have communicated this to their fellow villagers. An individual who has worked among the Koho reported that they remained so close to the local hospital that they often became a nuisance.[14]

Endurance

The Koho are a strong, hardy people accustomed to the hardships of outdoor living. Among the Koho, the Kil are especially noted for their endurance. They inhabit the most rugged areas of the Koho territory and are the most nomadic. Their stamina on a long march is legendary. The one-house encampments of the Kil are far apart; hence, if they wish to visit each other, they must be able to travel for hours over high mountains, through thick forests, and across deep ravines.[15]

Although no specific information is available concerning the endurance of the other groups of the Koho, the fact that hunting is their normal occupation would indicate their ability to cover considerable distances in a short time.

Psychological Characteristics

Within the context of their culture, the Koho are generally an industrious and intelligent people. They work in sustained bursts of effort. When they plant or harvest the rice and corn crops, they will toil long hours; however, this sustained activity is often followed by periods of idleness.

The Koho are reported to be honest and reliable in their dealings with outsiders; however, absence from the family unit over a long period of time diminishes the reliability of the individual Koho.[16]

Christian missionaries report the Koho have a strong desire to learn. The missionaries also noticed that when a few Koho learned the basic rudiments of reading and writing, other Koho immediately clamored to be taught. Reportedly, several Koho youths advanced far enough to enter a Vietnamese high school.[17]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The degree of complexity and sophistication of Koho social organization varies among the Koho subgroups. For example, the more advanced and permanently settled Sre in the southern portion of the Koho area have a relatively well-organized social system with classes from slaves to the very wealthy, but the Kil—less advanced and more nomadic—have little formal organization.* In general, however, Koho society is matrilineal and matrilocal† with the extended family and the village as the two most important social units.[1]

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

In all Koho groups, the extended family is the most important social unit. The importance of the individual is subordinate to that of the family; the family is responsible for misdemeanors or transgressions committed by an individual.[2] With the exception of sorcerers, considered to be especially favored by the spirits, positions of power and authority are obtained largely as a result of their family relationships. Chiefs and notables are the most respected male family heads with an extensive knowledge of traditions, customs, and laws.[3]

In the Koho society, women own and inherit most property, initiate marriage, and transmit the family name. After marriage the husband normally resides with his wife and her family. However, deviations from the matrilocal residence pattern do occur, especially when the bride's family is very poor or, in the rare case of polygamous marriage, when the bride will reside either in the groom's home or in the home of the groom's first wife.[4]

Several families—husband, wife, and offspring—reside together in each of the several longhouses constituting a Koho village. Although women own and inherit family property, the husband can acquire wealth and is, to some extent, the head of his nuclear family unit, making many of the basic decisions, disciplining children, and eventually supervising work of his sons-in-law.[5]

---

* One reliable source stated that the Sre have a well-organized social system, but no further information was available.

† As mentioned earlier, the one Koho group diverging significantly from this pattern—the Ma—are the subject of a separate chapter.

The husband, however, is subordinate to the authority of his wife's family. The family authority is usually exercised by the eldest male of the woman's kin group. A husband cannot achieve an influential position in his wife's family, although he can do so in his sister's family—eventually even becoming the head of her extended family.[6]

Men are generally assigned the tasks of clearing the land, harvesting, hunting, fishing, and basketmaking; and the women, tasks of preparation of meals and rice wine, and caring for the children. During the winter, hunting and fishing occupy much of the men's time, while during the spring and summer, the primary activity is agriculture.[7]

Children are well liked and well cared for in Koho society; female children are preferred over male children, as a female child will eventually bring into the nuclear family unit a son-in-law to assist the father in his work.[8]

Daily Routine

The daily routine of the Koho begins early in the morning, when the Koho women arise to prepare the first meal of rice cooked with other vegetables, meat, or fish. Men attend to the routine chores of feeding the livestock. After the meal, the Koho women and men go to their respective tasks, as required by the season and the day of the lunar month (the Koho designate particular days for particular activities*).

Late in the afternoon the men return to the village; the women put aside their tasks and prepare a moderately large meal. After the meal, the Koho generally entertain themselves with discussion, singing, and storytelling around the hearth until about 10 o'clock when they retire for the night.

A feast, funeral, sacrifice, or ceremony will alter the daily Koho routine.[9]

Marriage

Koho marriage is usually monogamous and is initiated by the women. Polygamy is permitted but is rare and seemingly restricted to the most wealthy and influential of the village chiefs and nobles. Marriage between persons with the same family name is deemed incestuous and is strictly forbidden.[10]

Customarily, the Koho woman selects her husband from among the available men of her own or neighboring villages. After the man and his family have been approached and an agreement reached between the two families, the couple are considered engaged. The marriage is usually celebrated after an engagement period of unreported duration.[11] Customarily, the bridegroom's parents are compensated for the loss of their son by the bride's family prior to the marriage ceremony.[12]

---

* See "Customs and Taboos," p. 405.

At the marriage ceremony a sorcerer, or in his absence the bride's mother, invokes the blessings of the spirits on the young couple. During the ritual, animals are sacrificed—buffaloes, pigs, or chickens, depending upon the wealth of the bride's family—and the sacrificial blood, mixed with rice wine, is used to anoint the newly married couple's feet. During the ensuing celebration much rice wine is consumed. The newly wedded couple immediately set up housekeeping in the longhouse of the bride's family. Unlike other Mon-Khmer peoples—such as the Bahnar—a waiting period before the consummation of the marriage is not mandatory.[13]

The bridegroom resides with his wife's family, tilling their fields and working with his bride's family under the direction of his in-laws. Any property or wealth he accumulates during his marriage will be inherited by his daughters: he is allowed to give little or nothing to his own parents. At the death of the wife, should her family fail to supply a replacement, the husband will return to his own family's house; however, children will remain with his wife's family.

The Koho consider adultery a serious crime and punish it severely. The guilty must pay fines to their spouses, to the families of their spouses, and to the village headman and elders. The culprits must also offer sacrifices for purification.[14] The severity of the punishment is contingent upon the actions of the spouses of the guilty parties: fines are higher if the spouse of one of the guilty parties repudiates or divorces his or her wife or husband.[15]

Divorce and Second Marriages

Divorce and second marriages are permissible among the Koho, as is polygamy; however, divorce and second marriages are the exception rather than the rule. Divorce must be for cause, must follow the procedures governed by traditional customs and law, and must be sanctioned by the village headman and elders. The procedures for acquiring second and third wives are regulated by traditional law and custom; in any case, polygamy is probably rare because the Koho society is matrilineal and matrilocal.

Should a spouse desert the family, his or her parents must pay a fine to the parents of the deserted spouse and sacrifice one buffalo. The deserted spouse may divorce the absent husband or wife. If one of the marriage partners justly accuses the other of impotence, laziness, or incompatibility, divorce is pronounced by a council of the two families and the village notables without indemnity or sacrifice. Usually, however, a man cannot obtain a divorce unless it is proven he has remonstrated with his wife several times and that the wife has continued to misbehave or refuse to work despite the repeated exhortations of her husband and the members of his family. Once divorce is sanctioned by the village elders, the couple cannot continue living together.[16]

Polygamy is generally restricted to a few wealthy chiefs or elders. A man cannot marry a second or third time without the permission of his first wife. In reality, the role of second and third wives is that of a servant. In a polygamous marriage, the husband usually maintains his residence in the house of his first wife.[17]

Birth

When a pregnant Koho woman feels the first labor pains, the midwife (*mo boai*) is summoned and usually stays in the house for 3 days after the birth to nurse the mother and the child. After a normal birth, the midwife and the father offer a sacrifice of a chicken and a jar of wine. Payment to the midwife is a bead necklace, a brass bracelet, and a blanket.

If labor is difficult, a second midwife may be summoned. If she cannot deliver the child, a third, more expert midwife or *mo boai giac* will assist. Mo boai giac are very rare; there may be only one for every five or six villages. There are also some skillful male midwifes or *xe boai*. The tribesmen believe that skilled midwives have received their expertise from heaven.[18]

Although it is known that the birth of abnormal children is accompanied by numerous sacrifices of pigs, goats, buffaloes, and jars of wine to appease the spirits, no information was available concerning the Koho treatment of stillborn or malformed children or Koho attitudes toward abortion.[19]

Childhood and Child-Rearing Practices

The Koho like large families and rear their children with great care. Children are never abandoned; orphans are usually cared for by the mother's family, although occasionally they are cared for by neighbors who adopt them and treat them like their own children. Girls are particularly valued by the Koho.[20]

Instructed by their parents and by their mother's relatives in the family and village customs, children are assigned tasks to prepare them for the responsibilities of adulthood. Boys are taught agricultural techniques and hunting and fishing skills, while girls learn the usual tasks of the village women—cooking, weaving, and the care of small children.

The youngest daughter is required to remain with her parents to care for them in their old age. However, if an elder daughter lives with her parents, her youngest sister is free to leave her family. Should the elder daughter die before the parents, however, the youngest daughter must return to care for the parents. Never are Koho parents abandoned by their daughters.[21]

Missionary groups report that some Koho peoples exhibit a great interest in learning and are eager to have their children educated.[22]

Death and Burial

The Koho divide death into two types—natural deaths and deaths considered calamities—occurring because of accidents, violance, or during childbirth. The second type of death, the violent death, is believed to be caused by evil spirits. The Koho peoples, particularly the Kil, react strongly to death.[23] The Kil are reportedly so affected by death that they flee their house when someone dies, returning only to sleep. On the day of the funeral, the Kil leave the burying ground to rush into the village, crying out loudly to frighten off any evil spirits.[24] The fear of dying away from their own villages is common among the Koho groups, as well as among other Montagnard tribes.[25]

The Koho treat death as an occasion of great significance: death is accompanied by ceremonies, sacrifices, fixed mourning periods, and special procedures for the survivors, established by traditional law and custom. The rites connected with death and burial actually commence early—when an individual appears to be dying. The dying tribesman is bathed and dressed in his finest clothes; as soon as he dies, all sacrifices for his recovery are suspended. Should he die in the evening or at night, a buffalo, a pig, and a chicken are sacrificed at sunrise. If he dies at about 6 o'clock in the morning, the sacrifices are offered immediately; if he dies during the day, the sacrifices take place at sunset. The method of the animal sacrifices is standardized: the buffalo must be pierced through the heart with lances; the pig and chicken must be killed with a burning brand, which is later placed in the tomb. Following the sacrifices, a jar and a cup are broken at the feet of the corpse, and the pieces are placed in a basket left near the tomb. Offerings of food are made to the spirits, who are invoked to come for the deceased. A village feast follows, with the men eating first, then the young people, and finally the women. Some food is taken to the woodcutters who are fashioning a casket from a tree trunk. During the entire ceremony, friends and relatives of the deceased continue to arrive bringing buffaloes, pigs, chickens, and jars of rice wine with them. Huge quantities of food and rice wine are consumed by all the villagers.

The actual burial normally takes place on the third or fourth day after death, although some wealthy families among the Sre keep a dead parent in the home for 7 days. The food offerings are put in the same basket as the fragments of the broken jar and cup, and then the basket is placed near the tomb. When the coffin is placed in the tomb, any other caskets that might be inside are removed and replaced atop the new coffin, the oldest one occupying the very top position.[26] The burial ceremony may last several days.

After the death of his wife, a Koho tribesman generally returns to the home of his own family, but his children remain in their mother's household.[27]

Generally both men and women observe a mourning period of 1 year for the death of a spouse. A man, however, may be exempt from this practice and may remarry before the full mourning period, if he obtains permission from his deceased wife's family or if he marries a sister of his deceased wife.[28]

Inheritance Customs

Among the Koho peoples, property is inherited by women. In a family of three daughters, the inheritance is divided in the following manner: the eldest receives three-tenths, the second eldest two-tenths, and the youngest, one-half. This is the formula for division, because the youngest daughter is responsible for all the expenses of her parents' death such as ritual sacrifices and maintenance of the tomb. All other family expenses are divided among the heiresses in proportion to their inheritance shares. If all three girls live at home, thus all being responsible for the parents' funeral arrangements, the inheritance and all other expenses are divided equally among them.

After the death of a wealthy Koho tribesman, a few buffaloes will be given to his mother and sisters, his other blood relatives will receive a present worth 2 or 3 piastres, and jars and any other valuable objects become the property of the widow. When a widower dies, his daughters inherit the portion of his property that would have gone to his wife.[29]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

All aspects of Koho life are governed by custom. Virtually every act is influenced by the ritualistic traditions passed on from generation to generation. Houses are built according to specific rules, and fields are cultivated during the same time each year in the same traditional manner. A tribesman whose actions conflict with these traditions is subjected to great disapproval from his fellows. Maintenance of their traditional customs, not the creation of new ways, is the chief objective of Koho life.

Dress

Dress is quite simple among the Koho; ordinarily, the men wear a loincloth, and the women wear a skirt wrapped around their waist. During their annual trading trips to the coast, the tribesmen obtain Vietnamese and Western garments with which they supplement their traditional dress. Some tribesmen wear army surplus clothing.[1]

The Kil, considered to be the least advanced of the Koho groups, wear clothing made from tree bark.[2]

For ceremonial occasions the tribesmen wear decorated cotton tunics embroidered with geometric designs and decorated with colored strings and balls. For great buffalo sacrifices, the men offering the prayers—the house chiefs and elders—wear red garments, for red is associated with power, joy, and magnificence.[3]

Koho women wear large ivory discs in their earlobes; in time the earlobes may be stretched to reach their shoulders. They wear glass necklaces and brass rings on their ankles and wrists. Many items are worn both for their decorative effect and for the pleasing sound they produce.

Children wear necklaces and bracelets with tiny bells attached to them.

Tribal Folklore

The Koho have a strong oral tradition of proverbs, riddles, legends, and humorous stories transmitted in rhythmic, poetic form. The following are samples of Koho proverbs: [4]

> If the stars are green at night, it will be dry tomorrow: if they are sparkling, it will rain tomorrow.

> If you see a snake on your path, you will find what you are looking for.
>
> If a dog gives birth to three puppies, they will be good for hunting deer.
>
> If a dog gives birth to two puppies, they will be good for chasing rats.

Tribal folklore reinforces and perpetuates the customs and traditions of the tribe. Many proverbs cover aspects of behavior, establishing the traditional norms, or interpret natural events.

Sometimes the Koho speak obliquely; for example, if a tribesman says he is going to look for wood on the mountain, he may really mean he is going to hunt deer. Or if he says, "You must cut something, the bamboo is ready to cut, slice it," he may mean the rice wine is ready to drink, and the time has come to drink it. This oblique speech is related to a customary dislike of saying certain things directly. Also, these oblique phrases are traditional, and their meanings are known by all the tribesmen.[5]

The Koho groups also have many riddles, which they enjoy in their leisure time. Some are the following: [6]

> What torch is strong enough to illuminate the universe?
> Answer: The moon.
>
> What is the red fruit which one cannot touch or take in his hands?
> Answer: Fire.
>
> Who moves his lips when his body doesn't move anymore?
> Answer: The exhausted sorcerer who is still murmuring incantations.

Koho legends, often recounted as long, drawn-out stories to entertain the tribespeople in the evening, may be divided into five types: tales about the origin of things and the universe; stories dealing with an age of legendary heroes, who may be equated with the yang, or spirits; stories with human heroes who performed prodigious feats; narratives about the activities of the evil spirits known as *caa* and the tiger men, the *somri* (men who the tribesmen believe can turn into tigers); and stories dealing with the forest and jungle animals, who are treated as if they were human (as in Aesop's fables).[7]

Folk Beliefs

Taboos or interdictions among the Koho peoples comprise three groups: taboos called *abany*, forbidding a person to say certain things; taboos called *wer*, violations of which require sacrifices; and taboos called *chong*, prohibitions against mixing specified items together.[8] Chong taboos or prohibitions probably vary from village to village; no specific information was available.

The following examples are given to indicate some types of Koho taboos. A Koho must not use the real name of his parents when addressing them, nor should he say he is thirsty, because this may mean he will not find anything to drink. A Koho should never say that his ricefield is growing well, because this would put it in grave danger of failing. Other lesser taboos of this kind include the prohibition against placing the drinking straw for rice wine jars toward the entrance of the house. Also, Koho custom decrees that a tribesman should never disturb an anthill.[9]

According to the Koho, there are lucky and unlucky days. Odd days of the lunar month are considered lucky and even days unlucky. Cutting bamboo to be used in the house must be done on odd days. The best time to sow rice is the first or third day of the first quarter of the moon, or on the first, third, fifth, seventh, or ninth day of the second quarter. A trading trip or a trip for personal affairs should begin on an odd day; fishing and hunting are most productive on odd days. On the last day of the lunar month, no one may work in the fields.[10]

Months are also lucky and unlucky. Months are counted beginning with the feast of the New Year, Lir Bong, which comes about 1 month after the Vietnamese celebrate their New Year, Tet. The fifth month of the year is judged the best for sowing, and the eighth is the worst for all farming.[11]

Members of the Sre group believe if certain prohibitions are broken, the guilty will be struck by lightning. The prohibitions include eating mango, silver-colored fish, or meat and fish combined; allowing a lizard to climb to the top of the house; putting a lizard on the back of a buffalo (the buffalo will be struck by lightning); using a deerskin lash to tie a buffalo to a yoke; blowing a horn inside the house; attaching a bell to a cat's neck; getting on a billy goat while holding a sword; and committing incest.[12]

Eating and Drinking Customs

The Koho believe that rice, the staple of their diet, was a gift of the gods, who taught them to cultivate and eat it. The Koho diet also includes wild herbs, vegetables, and meats.

According to Koho belief, the great spirit Ndu taught men to eat meat: To satisfy their hunger, Ndu told men they could eat chicken, pork, buffalo, and deer with rice.

Food preparation is subject to custom, and methods vary from village to village. For example, in one Koho village the preparation of spinach involves cooking over a roaring fire, amid complete silence—not a word to be spoken. Meanwhile the cook must remain in the same position during the entire cooking operation. Violation of these instructions is believed to result in bitter spinach.[13] Preparation of rice is controlled by customs regulating the quality of the cooking fire.

A Koho legend relates that the porcupine taught the tribesmen the technique for the fermentation of rice wine. The porcupine told them not to ferment wine from berries, fruits, or roots but only to use rice. Rice is fermented in particular jars with herbs for flavor.[14]

Originally two tribal women were taught the process of making wine: hence, this is always the duty of the women. When a jar of rice wine is opened, the first cupful is always offered to the spirits to thank them for having taught man how to make rice wine and to eat certain foods.[15]

The Koho personalize unhusked rice (paddy), believing that rice wine is the liver of the paddy, and cooked rice, the flesh of the paddy.[16]

Customs Relating to Animals

The Koho raise chickens, pigs, and buffaloes, primarily as sacrificial animals. In addition, the Sre group uses the buffalo for cultivation of their rice fields. The buffalo is considered the prime sacrificial animal, while pigs and chickens are used for secondary sacrifices. To the spirits, the sacrificial buffalo is believed to represent man; in fact, prior to their slaughter buffaloes are named and deemed part of the village. The sacrificial buffalo represents the grievances or desires of the family or house offering the sacrifices. Once sacrificed, the flesh of the buffalo, divided among the spirits, family, and villagers, represents a kind of communion uniting them all.[17]

The Koho are forbidden to raise any goat which has managed to get to the roof of a house and walk upon it; nor may they raise a litter of three piglets. To raise white and black pigs together is forbidden, as this will cause lightning to strike.[18]

Customs Relating to Houses and Villages

At certain times a house may be considered taboo; that is, no one may then enter except those who live in it. The Koho believe a great misfortune would befall them if a nonresident were to enter a house under taboo. Houses are taboo for 7 days after the birth of a child. After certain sacrifices, a house may be taboo from 3 to 7 days. When a sick person in the house is taking certain remedies, or when the family's daughter-in-law gives birth, the house may also be declared taboo for a number of days. Among the Sre, a house is taboo after the family participates in a ceremony of washing the feet of the family buffaloes after the rice planting.[19]

Entrance into rice storehouses is forbidden, unless a sacrifice has been made. Among the Sre, no one may work inside a house for 3 or 7 days after a burial.

Each Koho village has a small stand of sacred trees called *yang bri*, which the Koho believe are inhabited by spirits. To cut even a twig from the sacred trees is forbidden because the spirits inflict their vengeance by bringing sickness and death upon all the villagers. Consequently, when the village has an epidemic, the sorcerers and tribesmen believe the cause is a violation of sacred trees.[20]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

Early reports indicate that formerly the Koho were extremely suspicious of strangers, refusing to aid them in any way. Occasionally, suspicion became outright hostility, resulting in the setting of traps and barriers along village paths.[21] More recent information shows a change due to increased contact with the outside world. Now many Koho villages offer food, drink, and lodging to visiting strangers.[22] Although the Koho are still too reserved to accord sincere generosity to any except proven friends, they do extend hospitalities to any powerful alien group because of their fear of reprisal.[23]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

Religion dominates the lives of the Koho. The beliefs of the tribesmen are animistic, involving absolute faith in a vast pantheon of spirits.[1] Tradition encompasses the requirements for successful interaction with the spirits through appropriate rituals, ceremonies, taboos, interdictions, and sacrifices. The basic beliefs and practices are similar throughout the Koho area, with specific details varying from village to village.

Principal Spirits

In the pantheon of spirits sacred to the Koho are the supreme being (Ndu) and innumerable other spirits, including those of the sun (Yang Tongai), moon (Yang Konghai), earth (Yang Tioh), sky (Yang Truu), and thunder (Yang Dong Rong). Multitudes of spirits inhabit various terrain features such as mountains, patches of forest, and prominent rocks. The Koho people believe spirits inhabit certain animals, such as tigers, and objects in the village—rice wine jars, the village gate, and tools. Although no temples, pagodas, or other religious structures are built in honor of these spirits, the tribesmen do designate patches of forest or particular rocks as sacred areas.[2] In addition to the good spirits, or yang, the Koho have a group of evil spirits, or caa, believed to cause misfortunes such as accidents, illness, and death.

Spirits especially important to the Sre are the spirit of the mountain and the spirit of the waters. The spirit of the mountain is awesome, pictured as a tiger, a serpent, or a dragon; the spirit of the waters is evil, attacking men and causing them to fall ill. The *yang che* or spirits of the plants are benevolent and responsible for all the rice the tribesmen eat, all the cotton used for clothing, and all the materials used for building.[3]

Religious Ceremonies

The principal religious ceremonies and sacrifices of the Koho are related to the agricultural cycle and the life cycle (birth, marriage, and death). The most important agricultural ceremony is the Feast of the New Year, Lir Bong, a celebration traditionally coinciding with the annual planting. The date of this ritual varies from village to village, but it generally occurs in the spring, between the end of March and the beginning of May. This ritual and its ceremonial feast invoke the spirit of rice and include a ceremonial blessing of the unhusked rice to be planted at seeding time. The participants in this ritual anoint the pillars and doors of the granary, the rice pile, the house, and their own chests with a mixture composed of water, termite earth (similar to an anthill), and a few plants. The Koho believe this mixture regenerates the vital spiritual forces in both the unplanted rice and in themselves.[4]

The Feast of the New Year is essentially a family celebration. With the head of the household presiding over all the assembled relatives, the ritual is conducted in the family granary. All farm implements are laid out. A small jar of rice wine is opened and prepared for drinking, and a pig is sacrificed and grilled over a fire. The pig's entrails are placed in a bowl as an offering to the spirits. Then the household head offers a long prayer to the spirit of rice, invoking by name the spirit for every mountain, hill, ricefield, sacred wood, pond, prominent rock, and forest clearing in the tribal area. Next, everyone present drinks from the jar of rice wine; then everyone shares the meat of the sacrificed animals.[5]

Other ceremonies related to the agricultural cycle include sacrifices when fields are cleared and burned, when rice is planted, during the growing phase (to assist growth), and at harvest.[6]

Religious Practitioners

The ceremonies of the agricultural cycle are conducted by heads of households and villages, who occupy an almost sacred position, for the tribesmen believe these men embody the traditions and practices of their people.

Ceremonies to heal the sick are conducted by specialists called *bojou.* Among the Sre, Nop, and Kil, a bojou may be either male or female. Usually one bojou serves a group of villages in his immediate area. Through divination, the bojou determines the nature of illness, identifies the evil spirits responsible, and decides the sacrifices required to induce the spirits to take away the illness. Herbal medicines are used in conjunction with the sacrifices in healing ceremonies.[7]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Koho economy is based primarily upon rice cultivation and secondarily upon the home production of baskets, pottery, cloth, and other items. Except for the Sre subgroup, which grows wet rice on permanent irrigated fields or paddies, the Koho use the slash-and-burn technique of cultivation, which involves clearing the forested areas, burning the vegetation during the dry winter season, raising dry rice in the field until the soil nutrients are depleted, and then moving to a new area.

The Sre cultivate irrigated ricefields in valley bottomlands and along the slopes of valleys. Fields on slopes are constructed in tiers or terraces. Sre ricefields are divided into small units separated by dikes, which often consist of two mud walls forming a channel for the irrigation water. Rivers and streams in the area are dammed and diverted into the irrigation channels, some of which are several kilometers long.

After the first spring rains have soaked the earth, the villagers prepare the dikes and channels. Soon the streams carry sufficient water to permit irrigation of the fields. Then the fields are harrowed with wooden-toothed rakes drawn by buffalo, flooded, and harrowed again until the soil has the consistency of fine liquid mud. The soil is then kneaded and flattened by passing a large board over it.

Rice is sown in this fine flat mud covered by a thin film of water. About the fifth day after planting, the water is drained from the fields. Once the shoots have grown a little, the paddy is again flooded and remains under water for the duration of the growing season.[1]

Slash-and-burn agriculture is practiced by the other Koho groups. The fields are used for about 3 years, then allowed to remain fallow for a period as long as 20 years. During this period, forest growth re-covers the plot and revitalizes the soil.

Among the Koho, the land under cultivation by this technique is called a *mir*. The mir is sown shortly after the beginning of the rainy season; the rice seeds are planted in holes made with pointed dibble sticks. During the growing period the mirs are watered by the rainfall of the summer monsoons. The field is weeded by the tribesmen; fences and watchtowers are erected to prevent marauding animals from destroying the crop. The rice is harvested in the fall.

Normally, Koho families cultivate mirs within an area designated by tradition. Thus, the cycle of changing from one mir to another is established by custom. The tribesmen know where each village has its particular area and where each family traditionally has established its mirs.

The Sre, although they themselves maintain permanent wet-rice fields, allow other groups to use areas in their forest land. The Kil, in particular, because of the poverty of their own lands, often cultivate mirs on Sre land. Thus, in the Sre area, lands held by one village may be cultivated by two entirely different Koho groups: the Sre villagers work the paddies, and another group cultivates the fields in the higher forest by the slash-and-burn method.[2]

To supplement their diet, the Koho hunt, fish, and plant small gardens of beans, corn, and other vegetables.

Koho arts and crafts include weaving, basketweaving, pottery making and ironworking. Basketmaking is particularly important among the Koho: baskets are designed to serve many practical needs of storage and transportation. The design and shape of baskets vary from village to village. Villages located near good deposits of clay engage in pottery making. Only women are permitted to make pottery.[3] The value of a pot is determined by the amount of rice or salt it will hold.

Trade

During the dry season, when agricultural tasks have ceased for the year, members of some Koho groups take an annual trip to the coast to pay taxes to the Vietnamese Government and to trade in the coastal towns. They exchange blankets, animal skins, and pigs for clothing, salt, and jars. The coastal trading centers are Phan Thiet, Phan Rang, and Nha Trang. The expedition to the sea takes several weeks because of the heavy burdens. Experiences on these trips become the subject of long evening storytelling sessions.[5]

Tribesmen probably also trade in highland towns, and they may deal with Vietnamese peddlers who pass through the tribal areas.

For any important commercial transaction, the Koho use an intermediary *(lam gong)*, who receives a commission of about 10 percent. For example, for hiring a servant, the intermediary receives a cow buffalo, a silk blanket, a silver bracelet, and a bead necklace. For the sale of jars worth three or four servants, the seller may employ as many intermediaries as he wishes, and the intermediaries divide the commission. The commission for jar sales is the same number of buffaloes as the number of servants designating the value of the jar. Each intermediary receives a brass bracelet and a bead necklace in addition to his share of the buffaloes. After a sacrificial ceremony, the purchaser, seller, and intermediary share a jar of rice wine and a chicken.

An intermediary is always responsible for payments for transactions he concludes. If his client is insolvent, the intermediary himself must make the payment, even if this means that his own children must help him to meet his obligation.

For the sale of a servant, the intermediary cannot collect his fee for 1 year; should the servant die within the year, he receives nothing. If the servant runs away during the year, the intermediary must obtain restitution from the seller or personally pay the buyer. At the end of the year, the intermediary and seller are no longer held accountable.

If, on the day of purchase, an animal dies in transit to the buyer's house, the seller must relinquish half of the price received; however, if the animal dies the next day, the transaction is considered closed, and neither the seller nor the intermediary is obliged to give the buyer a refund.[6]

The tribesman willingly buys on credit and will then meet his obligation as tardily as possible.[7]

Property System

Among the Koho, the women control the disposal of all property. Before an item can be sold, the permission of the women must be obtained. Property is inherited through the female descendants of the family.[8]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The village is the most important political unit among the Koho, although occasionally villages related by marriage will cooperate in a loose alliance. There is no political organization at the tribal level.

Political authority within the village is exercised by a village chief (*poa*), chosen not because he is a man of physical strength but because of his knowledge of tribal tradition. The chief is the symbolic representation of custom and is the guardian of the village tradition. There is also an informal council of elders, composed of household heads (*po hiu*) and the heads of extended families living in separate houses (*kumy*). This council apparently meets only to assist the chief in reaching decisions on particularly serious issues.[1]

Several Koho villages may cooperate on events or issues of common interest. In such cases, the loose alliance is led by a headman (*roklong*) chosen from one of the participating villages.

Under the French colonial administration, a French-appointed functionary selected from the village acted as the liaison between the French and the tribesmen, in addition to the chief chosen by the villagers. He was responsible for the initiation of French tribal programs, tax collection, and the communication of French decrees to the villagers.

Following the departure of the French, the Diem regime attempted to politically and socially integrate the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam. Officially, the Central Government handles relations between tribal villages, Government representatives deal with groups of seven or eight villages; while the villages themselves are represented by their village chiefs.[2]

Legal System

Koho law, part of the oral tradition passed from generation to generation, is expressed by taboos and prohibitions known and respected by all tribesmen. These oral laws, called the *nri*, describe various crimes in poetic and symbolic terms and state the penalties for nonobservance.[3] The Koho believe every crime upsets the harmony of the world by disturbing the spirits. The angry spirits punish offenders so that harmony is restored only when the guilty make a twofold restitution of offering a sacrifice to the spirits and paying a fine. Under the traditional Koho laws, there is no imprisonment or death penalty.[4]

Examples of some specific Koho laws are listed below. Among the Sre, incest is the worst possible offense. Reparations must be made to the offended spirits and to all the villagers. To appease the spirit of the sun, the sacrifice and feast take place in an open field. The sacrificial animals must be of the same color and type; for example, white chickens, white pigs, or white buffaloes.[5]

For the involuntary homicide or any accidental death such as death by being caught in a trap, payment is exacted from the person responsible—payment in the form of servants valued at the same level as the deceased. However, if the fatal accident occurs in spite of due precautions—for example, precautions taken by the owner of a trap to mark its location—then the payment is nine bull buffaloes.[6]

When an animal left in the care of another person dies or disappears due to negligence of the custodian, reimbursement must be made to the owner. In case of injury or accidental death of the animal, the custodian must immediately advise the owner, presenting him with the horns and the freshly cut ears. Failure to fulfill this formality requires the custodian to reimburse the owner.[7]

When a Koho commits suicide, his family must notify the village elders, who immediately institute an inquiry. Failure to notify authorities results in a penalty of fines, or possible accusation of murder; in the latter case, the penalty is heavy—three times the normal fee.[8] The family must also sacrifice a male buffalo and offer a jar of rice wine to the spirits of the rice paddy or forest at the site of the suicide. If the site is on another family's property, payment must be made to that family: one male buffalo, one jar worth four piastres, two bead bracelets, and a silver bracelet.[9]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences, which could be reviewed on the district level. Three members of the district court were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction and handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[10]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases, brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[11] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government has since promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[12]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[13] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[14]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[15]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[16]

Subversive Influences

The main objective of Viet Cong subversive activity is to win the allegiance of the Koho and to turn the tribesmen into an active, hostile force against the Republic of Vietnam. Another important

Viet Cong objective is to maintain their supply lines through the Koho area.

Subversive elements generally infiltrate tribal villages and attempt to win the confidence of the whole village or its key members. The subversive elements identify themselves with the villagers by providing assistance for village and family projects and by giving medical aid. A thorough knowledge and observance of tribal customs aid the Viet Cong in their effort to win the confidence of the tribespeople.

After the villagers' suspicions have been allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong proceed with an intense propaganda program directed against the Vietnamese Government. Individuals within the tribe are recruited, trained, and then used for various support or combat missions with the Viet Cong.

Occasionally, if propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong will resort to extortion and terror. The Koho are sometimes coerced into refusing to cooperate with the Vietnamese Government. The Viet Cong may also oblige the villagers to supply labor and materiel.[17]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Koho area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning the number of radios or Koho familiarity with them. However, radios are probably no less rare among the Koho than among other tribal groups of the Republic of Vietnam. Any radios in operation in the Koho area could pick up broadcasts from Saigon and provincial radio stations.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Koho dialect might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

Written communications might have some effect on the Koho. Although most Koho are illiterate, the tribe does have a written language developed for them by missionaries in the 1950's.[1] Although only a few Koho tribesmen can read this language, they are reportedly very eager to learn to read and write.[2] Other Koho may be able to read French and Vietnamese; they could communicate information in written materials to the remainder of the tribesmen. Data about the successful use of printed materials is not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Koho should be oriented around the principle of improving the condition of the villagers. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against Viet Cong harassment are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the specific Koho group. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the tribal elders in order to show respect for the tribal political structure. The Koho tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

The degree of responsiveness to innovation varies considerably among the Koho groups. For example, although the Kil remain almost completely isolated and wish only to preserve their traditional way of life, the groups near Di Linh and Da Lat (the Sre, Lat, and Tring) are reportedly anxious to gain an education and willing to accept change. These latter groups, likewise, are more accustomed to outside influences; some of their members have been educated in Vietnamese schools and hold positions with the Government.[1]

Most Koho groups would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained: the Koho resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Koho groups into new and larger villages, the control of malaria and other medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of education facilities.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or

strangeness. This consideration would limit activities among the Kil, while it would be less important among the Sre.

3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Koho groups encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
    e. Insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and Sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    a. Provide basic literacy training.
    b. Provide rudimentary vocational training.
    c. Present information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.
    d. Provide basic citizenship training.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Koho can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen are potential trackers, guides, interpreters, and intelligence agents. With intensive training and support, the Koho can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership they can be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat force.

In the past, the Koho were considered capable fighters, whether fighting offensively in raids against other groups or defensively within fortified villages.[1] Some Koho had military training with the French and are capable of sophisticated combat operations. Recently some Koho have been trained by U.S. personnel and are familiar with U.S. operational techniques as well as modern American equipment.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

In the past, the Koho relied upon crossbows, spears, lances, swords, and knives and were very skillful in their use. Their relatively small stature limits the weapons the Koho can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning Automatic Rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled and quickly reassembled.

The Koho pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Koho can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Koho cannot handle sophisticated devices, such as mortars, explosives, and mines, as proficiently as hand weapons. They cannot absorb the more abstract and technical aspects—such as timing trajectories—of such weapons.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Koho can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Koho learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

Some Koho are veterans of service with the French and are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE KOHO

Every action of the Koho tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Koho may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Koho are listed below:

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Koho village should be formal. Also it is advisable when visiting a strange village to be accompanied by a guide from a nearby village. He will be held responsible for any infraction of customs and taboos and therefore will be careful to see that none are committed. There have been cases reported where persons have been denied entrance to a Koho village if unaccompanied by a person from another village.[1] A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Koho. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Koho tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some of the

credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Koho should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a Koho house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Koho ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Koho house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from that house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Koho women. This could create distrust and dissension.
8. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not touch or otherwise tamper with Koho tombs.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
3. Do not mock Koho religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Koho life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Koho property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Koho language. A desire to

learn and speak their language makes a favorable impression on the Koho.

Health and Welfare

1. The Koho are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Koho areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and should have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XV (Summer 1962), p. 13.
2. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Areas Files Press, 1964), pp. 152–53; Marcel Ner, "Les Moi du Haut-Donnai," *Extrême-Asie*, LXXIX (August 1933), p. 338; Henri Maître, *Les Jungles moi* (Paris: Émile Larose, 1912), pp. 406–407.
3. The Koho Kil are not to be confused with the M'nong subgroup called the Kil. The M'nong Kil are discussed strictly as a M'nong group by Pierre Huard and A. Maurice in their "Les Mnong du Plateau Central Indochinois," *Bulletins et Travaux de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, II (1939), p. 128. Several authors refer to a Kil group related to the Koho tribes: Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 338; Quequiner, "Notes sur une peuplade moi de la Chaine Annamitique Sud: Les Cau S're," *Bulletins et Travaux de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, VI (1943); p. 396; David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 4.
4. Nhom Nghien Cuu Dan Toc (Cua Uy-Ban Dan-Toc) [Minority People's Study Group (of the Committee of Minority Peoples)], *Cac Dan Toc Thieu So O Viet-Nam* [*Minority Peoples of Vietnam*] (Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Van Hoa, 1959), m.p.
5. LaBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 152–56.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), p. 21.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 82–84; Ner, *op. cit.*, pp. 335–37.
9. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–71.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–6.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Peggy Bowen, "Literacy Multiplied and Glorified" *Jungle Frontiers*, XVII (Winter 1963), pp. 6–7; Willie Merkerson, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965); François Martini, "Notes et mélanges de la transcription du Sre (Koho)," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises* (1952), pp. 99–109.
4. E. H. Adkins, *A Study of Montagnard Names in Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State

University, February 1962), p. 7; Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, September 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

5. Merkerson, *op. cit.;* Martini, *op. cit.*, pp. 99–104; Hugh E. Early, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965).
6. Ner, *op. cit.*, pp. 335–38; P. Bertrand, "Les Conditions de la culture du riz dans le Haut-Donnai (Viet-Nam)," *L'Agronomie Tropicale,* VII (May-June 1952), p. 266.
7. Jean Cassaigne, "Les Mois de la région de Djiring," *Indochine,* IV (January-June 1943), No. 131, p. 12.
8. Quequiner, *op. cit.*, p. 396.
9. Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), pp. 17, 19, 40–44; Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 341; Maître, *op. cit.*, pp. 461–64.
10. Paul Neis, "Explorations chez les sauvages de l'Indo-Chine à l'est du Mekong," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie,* Septième Série, IV (1883), p. 492.
11. Quequiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 396–97; Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.
12. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1003–1004.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 131, p. 12; Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), p. 404.
2. Quequiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 395–97.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–31.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–14.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
8. Jules Canivey, "Notice sur les moeurs et coutumes des Moi de la région de Dalat," *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie,* IV (1913), p. 14.
9. Quequiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 395–97.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 396–97; Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1004.
11. Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
12. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 131, p. 11.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Merkerson, *op. cit.*
15. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1004.
16. Merkerson, *op. cit.*
17. Bowen, *op. cit.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13; Quequiner, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
2. Jacques Dournes, "Nri," *France-Asie,* VI–VII (May-June 1951), 1232–41.
3. Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
4. Georges Condominas, "The Mnong Gar of Central Vietnam,"

Social Structure in Southeast Asia, edited by G. P. Murdock (New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 29, 1960), p. 15.

5. Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, pp. 468–69.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
9. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 944–1017.
10. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13; Ner, *op cit.*, p. 346; Quequiner, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
11. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 133, p. 13.
12. Quequiner, *op. cit.*, p. 398; Merkerson, *op. cit.;* Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 481.
13. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.
14. Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
17. Kopf, *op. cit.*
18. Canivey, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–8.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.
21. Canivey, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–9.
22. Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7.
23. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1171.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13; Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1159–62.
26. Canivey, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–13.
27. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 478; Quequiner, *op. cit.*, p. 399; Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.
28. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 478; Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.
29. Canivey, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–9.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1071–72.
2. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
3. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1071–73; Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.
4. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1047.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1048.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 1046–52.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 1023.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 1023–24.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 1024.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 1146–47.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 1150–51.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 1150.
20. Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
21. Alexandre Yersin, "De Nhatrang à Tourane par les pays mois," *Indochine*, IV (April-July 1943), No. 137, pp. 3–8.

22. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.
23. Kopf, *op. cit.*

VI. RELIGION

1. Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 14.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1130–32.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 1154–59.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 1172–77.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Bertrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 267–68; Jacques Dournes, *En suivant la piste des hommes sur les hauts-plateaux du Viet-Nam* (Paris: René Julliard, 1955), p. 16.
2. Ner, *op. cit.*, pp. 335–38; Bertrand, *op. cit.*, p. 266.
3. Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 342.
4. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1011–20.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 974.
6. Canivey, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 346; Cassaigne, *op. cit.*, No. 132, p. 13.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1095–96.
2. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 2.
3. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1099–1105.
4. Dournes, "Nri," p. 1234.
5. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1106.
6. Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
9. Dournes, "Nri," p. 1236.
10. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
11. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.
12. Hickey, "Comments," *op. cit.*, p. 1.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–7.
2. *Ibid.*

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Kopf, *op. cit.;* Early, *op. cit.;* Merkerson, *op. cit.*

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE KOHO

1. Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Yersin, *op. cit.*, No. 137, p. 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adkins, E. H. *A Study of Montagnard Names in Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, February 1962.

Bertrand, Gabrielle. *Le Peuple de la jungle.* Paris: Société Commerciale d'Édition et de Libraire-Édition "Je Sers," 1952.

Bertrand, P. "Les Conditions de la culture du riz dans le Haut-Donnai (Viet-Nam), "*L'Agronomie Tropicale,* VII (May-June 1952), 266–75.

Bitard, Pierre. "Notes sur le Mon et les dialectes mon-khmers," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXI (1956), 303–307.

Boulbet, Jean. "Quelques aspects du coutumier (N'dri) des Cau Maa," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXII (1957), 108–78.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Bowen, Peggy. "Literacy Multiplied and Glorified," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVII (Winter 1963), 6–7.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Canivey, Jules. "Notice sur les moeurs et coutumes des Moi de la région de Dalat," *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie,* IV (1913), 1–30.

Cassaigne, Jean. *Le Coutumier koho.* Archives de la Province du Haut-Donnai, 1937.

———. "Les Mois de la région de Djiring," *Indochine,* IV (January-June 1943), No. 131, 11–13; No. 132, 13–14.

———. *Petit manuel de conversation courante en langue moi (Koho et Chau Sore).* Tandinh-Saigon: Imprimeur de la Mission, 1930.

Cheon, A., and Mougeot. "Essai de dictionnaire de la langue chrau (dialecte moi), comprenant 1400 mots et un grand nombre d'expressions et d'idiotismes, recueillies par M. Cheon, à But Doc (arrondissement de Bien-hoa), Cochinchine française," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* (1890), 5–106.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D. C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Condominas, Georges. "The Mnong Gar of Central Vietnam," *Social Structure in Southeast Asia.* Edited by G. P. Murdock. New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 29, 1960, 15-23.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.) *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Dournes, Jacques. *En suivant la piste des hommes sur les hautsplateaux du Viet-Nam.* Paris: René Julliard, 1955.

Dournes, Jacques. "Nri," *France-Asie*, VI-VII (May–June 1951), 1232–41.

———. "Structure sociale des montagnards du Haut-Donnai: Tribu des riziculteurs," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXIII (1948), 101–106.

Early, Hugh E. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Evans, Helen. "God is Our Refuge," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIII (Summer 1961), 5.

———. "A Rewarding Week," *Jungle Frontiers*, XI (Summer 1960), 4.

Fall, Bernard B. "Commentary on 'The Tribesmen'," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 135–40.

Gourou, Pierre. *Land Utilization in French Indochina.* New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Huard, Pierre, and Maurice, A. "Les Mnong du Plateau Central Indochininois," *Bulletins et Travaux de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* II (1939), 27–148.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. September 1965. (Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.)

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Areas Files Press, 1964.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

Martini, François. "Notes et mélanges de la transciption du Sre (Koho)," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises* (1952), 99–109.

Merkerson, Willie. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

"My Mind Is at Rest," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVII (Summer 1963), 8.

Neis, Paul. "Explorations chez les sauvages de l'Indo-Chine a l'est du Mekong," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, Septième Série, IV (1883), 481–504.

Ner, Marcel. "Les Moi du Haut-Donnai," *Extrême-Asie*, LXXIX (August 1933), 335–50.

Nhom Nghien Cuu Dan Toc (Cua Uy-Ban Dan-Toc) [Minority People's Study Group (of the Committee of Minority Peoples)]. *Cac Dan Toc Thieu So O Viet-Nam (Minority Peoples of Vietnam).* Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Van Hoa, 1959.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes;" *Jungle Frontiers*, XV (Summer 1962), 13.

Quequiner. "Notes sur une peuplade moi de la Chaine Annamitique Sud: Les

Cau S're," *Bulletins et Travaux de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* VI (1943), 395–402.

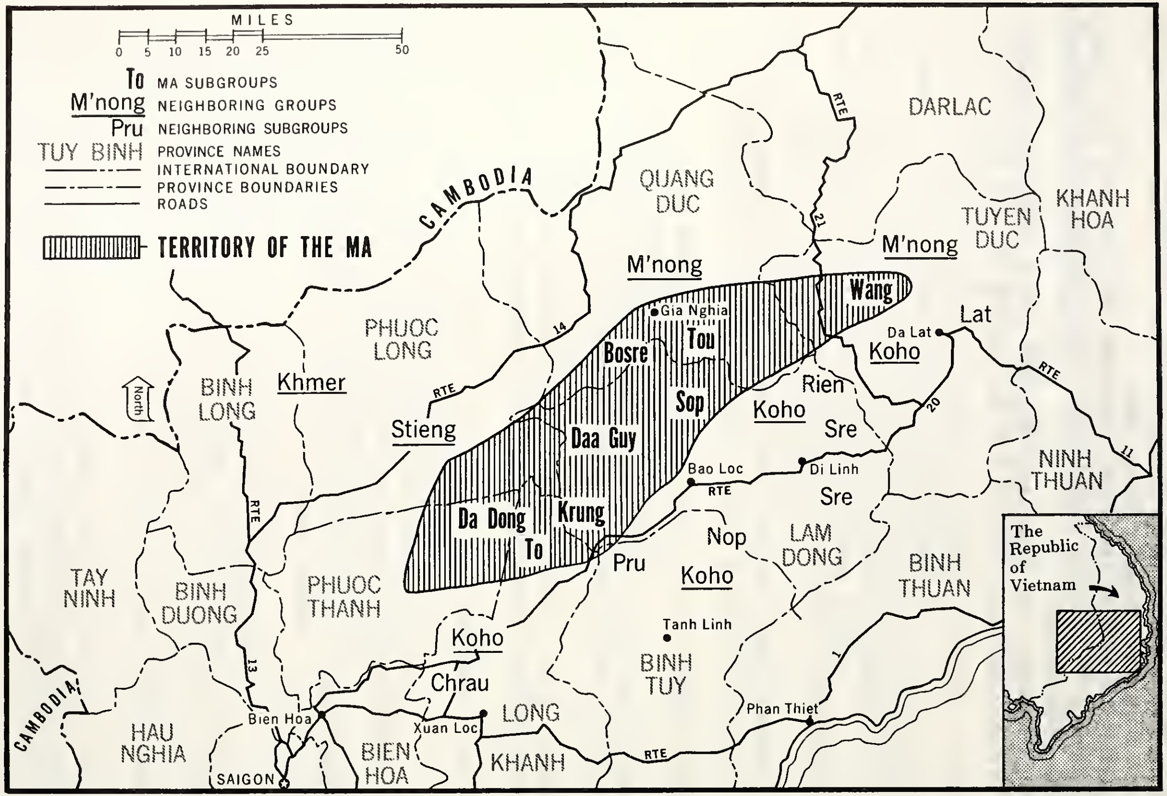
Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Department of State. *Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam.* (Department of State Publication No. 7839), Far Eastern Series 130, February 1965.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964.

Wickert, Frederic. "The Tribesmen," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 126–35.

Yersin, Alexandre. "De Nhatrang à Tourane par les pays mois," *Indochine,* IV (April–July 1943), No. 137, 3–9; No. 146, 4–6; No. 150, 4–8.


MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
To MA SUBGROUPS
M'nong NEIGHBORING GROUPS
Pru NEIGHBORING SUBGROUPS
TUY BINH PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
TERRITORY OF THE MA
North
CAMBODIA
QUANG DUC
DARLAC
TUYEN DUC
KHANH HOA
M'nong
M'nong
Wang
Gia Nghia
Tou
Bosre
Sop
Daa Guy
Da Dong
Krung
To
Lat
Da Lat
Koho
Rien
Koho
Sre
Sre
Bao Loc
Di Linh
RTE
20
11
21
14
13
1
RTE
NINH THUAN
PHUOC LONG
Khmer
BINH LONG
Stieng
TAY NINH
BINH DUONG
PHUOC THANH
Pru
Nop
LAM DONG
Koho
BINH THUAN
Koho
Chrau
Tanh Linh
BINH TUY
LONG
KHANH
Xuan Loc
Bien Hoa
SAIGON
BIEN HOA
HAU NGHIA
Phan Thiet
CAMBODIA
The Republic of Vietnam

The Ma Subgroups

CHAPTER 11. THE MA

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Ma are one of several distinct groups which comprise the Koho-speaking peoples—an important grouping of Montagnards speaking mutually intelligible languages in the Republic of Vietnam.*

The Ma speak one of the several closely related Koho dialects. These dialects all stem from the Bahnaric subgroup of the Mon-Khmer language stock. Although linguistically related, the Ma and the other Koho groups do not share the same type of social structure.† Ma society is based upon patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal organization. However, like the other Koho groups, the Ma extended family and village form the most important social and political units.

The Ma inhabit the rough, mountainous terrain and alluvial plains of the Da Dung River region. Due to the variation in terrain the principal crop, rice, is cultivated by both dry and wet methods.

Name and Size of Group

Sometimes referred to as the Cau Ma, the Ma consist of several subgroups: To (Cho To), Ro (Cho Ro), ‡ Sop (Cho Sop), Borse, Tou, Da Dong, Wang, Daa Guy, and the Krung.[1] According to a North Vietnamese source the Ma group numbers approximately 30,000; a South Vietnamese source estimates the population at 21,500.[2]

Location

The Ma tribesmen inhabit a sparsely populated strip of land bordering both banks of the upper Da Dung River. Their territory includes the northeastern portion of Phuoc Thanh Province, the northern tip of Long Khanh Province, a southeastern portion of Phuoc Long Province, the western half of Lam Dong Province, the southern portion of Quang Duc Province, and extends into the eastern portion of Tuyen Duc Province. Scattered villages are also found in a northern border area of Binh Tuy Province.

---

* In addition to the Ma, the Koho-speaking peoples are composed of the following groups: Chrau, Kil, Lat, Laya, Nop, Pru, Rien, Sre, and Tring.

† The general Koho social structure pattern is matrilineal and matrilocal.

‡ The geographic location of the Ro subgroup has not been determined as of this writing.

The tribespeople neighboring the Ma are the M'nony to the north, various Koho groups to the east and south, and the Stieng to the West.

Terrain Analysis of Tribal Area

The left bank of the Da Dung River includes Bao Loc Plateau, which has moderate relief rising to approximately 3,000 feet, sharp mountains with an elevation of about 4,500 feet, the typical terrain of the area—the *dang*—which consists of sharp mountain ridges rising to about 2,000 feet; and the alluvial plains along the Da Dung River and other watercourses of the area. The right bank of the Da Dung River is also dang terrain.

The high and relatively evenly distributed precipitation gives this area rain forest vegetation of two distinct belts. At the higher elevations is the primary rain forest where the trees average 75 to 90 feet in height, forming a continuous canopy. Below this canopy are smaller trees of 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this type of forest, and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, this forest can usually be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.

The second belt or secondary rain forest which develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated, is more extensive in this area. In this forest the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.

The summer monsoon (April to mid-September) and the winter monsoon (November to March) provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. In the summer these winds come mainly from the southwest, in the winter from the northeast. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the monsoon-borne rain. Precipitation is high —averaging more than 80 inches in the lower elevation and more than 150 inches in the higher areas. Temperatures in the Ma region are as much as 15 degrees lower than those of the coastal regions.[3]

National Route 14 passes slightly to the west of the Ma area, Route 20 passes through the area across the Bao Loc Plateau, and a secondary road runs through the northeastern part of the area from Di Linh to Gia Nghia.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

All the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam are part of two large ethnic groups: the Malayo-Polynesian and the Mon-Khmer. In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Ma, as one of the Koho groups, belong to the Mon-Khmer grouping. Indochina has been a migratory corridor from time immemorial, and the movement of the Mon-Khmer peoples into what is now the Republic of Vietnam probably started centuries ago. The Mon-Khmer peoples are generally believed to have originated in the Upper Mekong Valleys, from whence they migrated through Indochina.[1]

Language

The term Koho refers to a number of tribal groups, including the Ma, Kil Lat, Tring, Sre, Rien, and Nop, that have very closely related dialects. The dialects of the various groups called Koho peoples are so similar that communication is possible among them. Since no language barrier exists among the Koho, anthropologists use the linguistic term Koho as the generic name for all these tribes.

The various Koho dialects stem from the Bahnaric subgroup of the Mon-Khmer language stock and consist primarily of short monosyllabic words.

The Koho groups have no written form for their dialects, although phonetic dictionaries and textbooks of their dialects do exist, thanks to the work of French and, more recently, American missionaries who lived among these people. In the 1950's, American missionaries reported some success in teaching a number of Koho to read and write their own dialect; however, no detailed information is available concerning the number of Koho who have acquired literacy. One source states that most Koho are still virtually illiterate.[2]

Under French colonial rule. little contact was permitted between the Vietnamese and the various Montagnard groups; thus, few Koho reaching maturity during the colonial period can speak Vietnamese, although some do speak French. Koho knowledge of Vietnamese depends largely upon proximity: Koho in the south, or near the towns of Di Linh or Da Lat, probably have some knowledge of Vietnamese gained through trading or other contacts, although it is doubtful that many have achieved fluency. Some members of Prong subgroup of the M'nong tribe are believed to understand some Koho dialects.

Legendary History

Like many of the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam, the Ma have legends reflecting a belief that they were the original inhabitants of the world, existing at the beginning of time, with few skills and clothed only in leaves of the wild banana tree. However, the great spirit N'duh and good spirits *yang*, who watched over the Ma, were concerned with the welfare of these people. N'duh and the good spirits sent to the Ma legendary heroes, four of whom are K'bung, K'yae, K'hum, and K'tam, to teach the ancestors of the Ma useful techniques for farming, hunting, iron forging, and house construction, as well as to give the tribesmen a code of laws.[3]

Factual History

There is little material about the political and social history of the Ma people. Reportedly, the Ma tribesmen were once unified in the area stretching westward from the central Vietnamese coastline to the mountainous course of the Da Dung River. Under the pressure of successive invasions by the Cham, Chinese, Vietnamese, and later the French, the Ma moved westward away from the fertile coastal areas into the rugged mountain terrain, where they could maintain their isolation. A restless, belligerent, and warlike people, the Ma were not pacified by the French until 1937. The Ma have been considered one of the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam who have most consistently resisted or ignored efforts to "civilize" them.[4]

Settlement Patterns

Ma villages are usually located near watercourses; however, the surrounding terrain determines the pattern of the villages. Upland or hillside villages comprise scattered farmsteads with their dry-rice fields nearby. These villages change location every 10 to 15 years as exhausted fields are abandoned in favor of new land.

On bottom land, some Ma settlements cluster around wet-rice paddy fields. The more permanent villages along the bottom land comprise 4 to 30 longhouses and generally form a rectangular or square pattern.

Within and adjacent to the Ma villages are small storehouses, small houses for the sick, grazing land, and plots of tobacco. No large communal houses were reported among the Ma.[5]

Although some Ma longhouses are built upon the ground, the

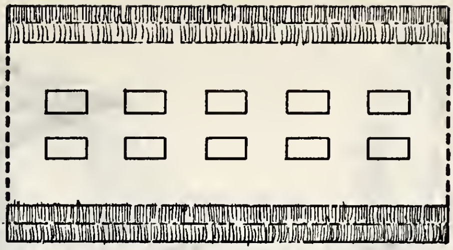


Figure 26. Layout of Ma village.

majority rest on pilings. Each longhouse, averaging approximately 40 meters in length, provides living quarters for 10 to 20 families.[6] The houses are constructed of hardwood beams and pillars, with sides of palm fronds and thatching and roofs made of palm branches. For the animals, an enclosure of bamboo and rattan is built adjacent to the house.[7]

The longhouse has a main entrance at one end. Facing the entrance to the house is an altar to the spirit of the hearth, *conao* or *nao,* made of painted or engraved planks ending in crosses of ferns and sprays of frayed bamboo fibers. Above the altar, from the smoke-blackened roof the Ma hang objects which symbolize every important event.[8] Every household birth is recorded in this manner, a small bamboo bow for a boy and a little bamboo fishing basket for a girl. Among the upland villages, before a new field is cleared, a branch, a leaf, or creeper is picked from the selected location and added to the collection hanging above the altar.[9]

In the front area of the house the Ma designate a hearth to be used only for lighting the pipes of guests. Weapons and tools are also stored in the front part of the house, and fishing gear is placed nearest the entrance. Toward the rear of the house are located the cooking hearths and compartments for the nuclear families. Rice is stored on shelves under the roof; jars of rice wine are placed near the hearths to hasten the fermentation process.[10]

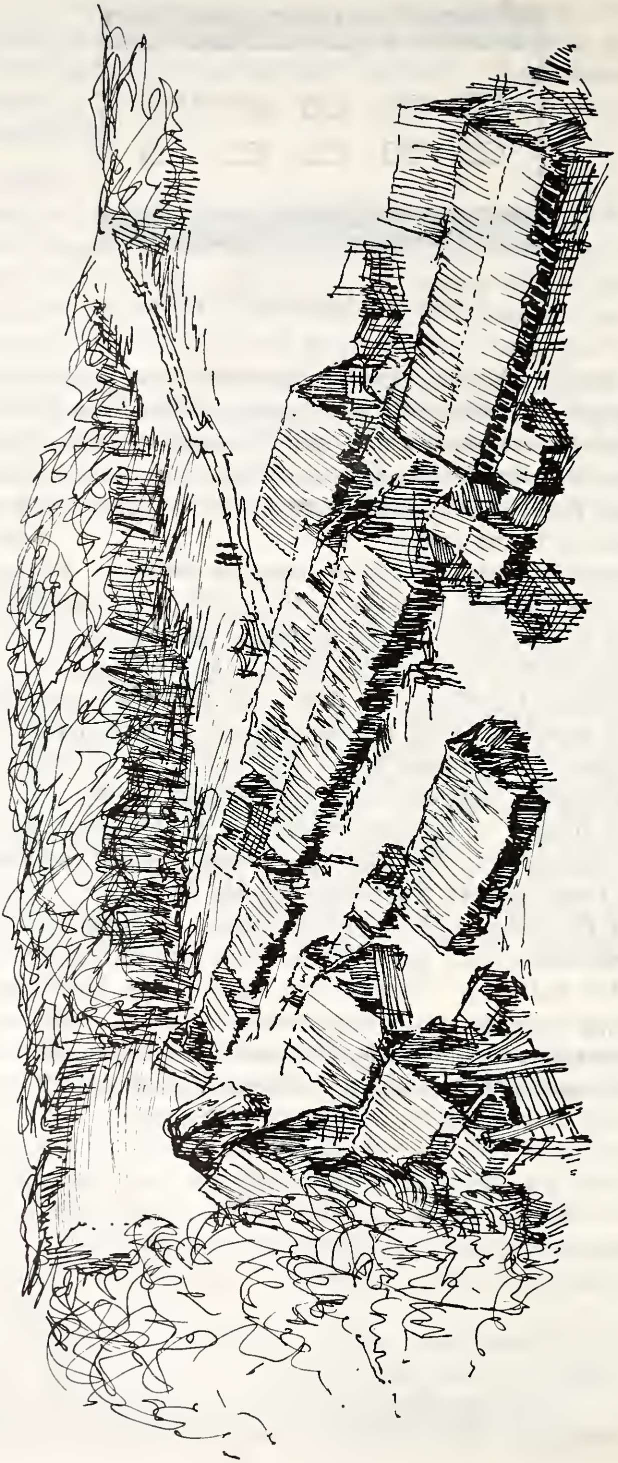


Figure 27. Layout of To village.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Ma tribesman is generally short—5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 5 inches—sturdy, and well proportioned.[1] His skin is smooth and reddish brown. Both sexes have broad faces and dark brown eyes, and wear their coarse, straight, black hair coiled in a bun at the nape of the neck. Various ornamental objects such as knives, pipes, various feathers, and wooden combs are inserted in the bun. The upper incisor teeth of the Ma are filed down to the gumline, resulting in a sibilance in their speech. Tribespeople stretch their earlobes with large ivory loops or thick ivory plugs.[2]

Health

The health of the Ma who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene practices are rudimentary.

The principal disease among the Ma is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal area. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal. The other, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[3]

The three types of typhus found in the Ma area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[4]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the area.[5] In addition, many of the women in the southern parts of the Ma area are reportedly afflicted with goiters.[6]

Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and lack of sexual hygiene.[7]

The Ma believe that disease is caused by evil spirits as punishment for offenses committed by an individual, a family, or a village. When a person becomes ill, a healer or good sorcerer, *canang*, is summoned. With a talisman or *dek* to which the Ma attribute great spiritual powers, the canang determines the nature of the disease and its probable cause; then he prescribes the appropriate sacrifice necessary to appease the spirits and relieve the illness. The canang recites incantations and administers medicines extracted from herbs and plants. Under pain of punishment prescribed by traditional Ma law, the canang must respond when called to heal the sick.[8]

Ma villages have a special small house for isolated family care of very sick persons. In some villages, the sick person is left alone; the villagers check from time to time to see if he is still alive. When the sick person dies, he is buried, and the small house is burned.[9] Lepers are usually isolated in the forest far from the villages. When they fail to eat the food left for them, they are presumed to be dead and are burned in their houses. The tribesmen's fear of the disease-causing evil spirits, rather than any fear of contagion, is responsible for the isolation of lepers and the very sick.

Psychological Characteristics

Although normally gregarious, talkative, and fond of mischief-making, the tribesmen are excitable, argumentative, and belligerent. Not completely pacified by the French until 1937, the Ma are reserved with strangers and resent any intrusion upon their traditional way of life. The Ma make positive judgments and voice strong opinions without hesitation.[10] One observer noted that some Ma tribesmen stated that were it not for the law and order maintained by the presence of outsiders, the Ma might well have killed each other off due to their inclination to fight among themselves.[11] Like other highland groups in the Republic of Vietnam, the Ma live in constant fear of the evil spirits and become greatly agitated when confronted by omens believed to be evil. They are somewhat fatalistic, believing their lives are subject to the whims of the spirits.[12] Industrious and comparatively hard-working people, the Ma have a reputation for being wily, skilled traders, and bargainers.[13]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Ma have a patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal social organization which centers around the family and village. Men play the dominant role, filling principal positions of status such as village chief, sorcerer, judge (usually a village elder), ironsmith, or canoemaker. Ma women are generally subservient to their men, although traditional laws allow them some freedom in selecting a husband. Their duties include motherhood, weaving, cooking, and assisting the men in agricultural chores.

Ultimate authority within the longhouse customarily rests with the oldest male member of the family line. Secondary authority among the member family units is held by the husband of each separate family. When an individual cannot discharge his responsibilities, his family is obligated to do so.[1]

The Ma patrilineal kinship system determines that the family name and property be passed down through the male line. If a father dies before his son is old enough to assume responsibilities as head of the family, the father's holdings are managed by his brother or, if he has no brother, by his first cousin. However, when the eldest son reaches adulthood, all of his father's property and prerogatives are transferred to him.

The Ma residency pattern is patrilocal. A daughter is considered only a temporary member of her father's family, for upon marriage she generally moves to the home of her husband and his family.[2]

Among the Ma group no social structure seems to exist at the clan or tribal level; the family and village form the main units of organization.

Family units are the extended type with many nuclear families (husband, wife, children) living in one longhouse. Villages comprise several longhouses, each containing as many as 10 to 20 nuclear families of the same patrilineal line.[3]

Daily Routine

In most highland villages the women rise at dawn to prepare the first meal of the day. Then the men arise and release the animals from the pens where they are kept overnight.

The men perform their early morning chores unhurriedly and deliberately; little work is undertaken before the first meal—the main meal of the day.

After the morning meal the family group separates, each member going about his individual task, having a light snack at midday. At sundown the family returns to the longhouse for an evening meal of leftovers. By ten o'clock the villagers usually retire for the night.

In addition to working in the fields and hunting, the men make canoes, work with iron, gather clay, and fish. The Ma women make pottery, cloth, and baskets.[4]

During the winter, no work is done in the fields, and the men wander about the village or occupy themselves with repairing their tools, homes, and weapons.

During a festival, ceremony, or period of deliberation by village elders, the tribespeople engage in activities associated with the special event, thus altering their daily routine.

Marriage

The Ma ordinarily marry at the age of 15 or 16; by then the girls have reached puberty and the young men are old enough to work full time alongside their elders. Marriage between persons related by blood is prohibited.[5]

Formal engagements occur only among prosperous and influential Ma families who wish to conserve their wealth or strengthen family alliances. When a young Ma becomes formally engaged he gives his future in-laws a jar as a bride price. He also sacrifices a chicken and a jar of rice wine to his fiancée and gives her a necklace, bells, a comb, and other small ornaments. If the girl breaks the engagement, she must give the young man two jars and a pig as compensation for the bride price.[6]

Women may, if the opportunity arises, also initiate marriage proposals. A young girl or widow approaches the man she desires through an intermediary and her family, who offer the man's family a brass bracelet and a necklace of beads; if they accept these gifts, a wedding date is set.

On the wedding day the bride carries a basket of firewood to the groom's house; there she is met by the groom's mother and led into the house to deposit her basket.

During the marriage rites sacrifices are offered. The intermediary offers the groom a handful of cooked rice six times followed by a cup of rice wine. The groom drinks half of the wine, giving the rest to his bride.

The wedding night is spent drinking and celebrating to the accompaniment of gongs and drums. The couple spend the following night in the nuptial chamber, while the festivities continue for 4 or 5 days with wine and foodstuffs provided by the groom's parents.[7]

In marriages among the less prosperous Ma families, the young boy will often go to live in the house of a 5- or 6-year-old girl whose family wishes them to marry later. When the girl reaches puberty, the marriage is consummated without any ceremony except the ritual sacrifice of a chicken and a jar of rice wine. Ten or fifteen days later, the girl visits the home of her husband's parents and a similar sacrifice is performed. Intermediaries at these weddings are paid only a bead necklace and a brass bracelet of little value.[8]

After the marriage and the payment of the bride price, the couple normally move into the longhouse of the husband's family. Exceptions occur when the prospective groom is too poor to pay the bride price. He then usually resides with his future parents-in-law, working their fields until the debt is paid. When a man marries a girl from a family wealthier than his, he may be adopted into her family with the dowry then given to his family.[9]

Incest and Adultery

Incest is considered the most serious offense a Ma can commit. According to generations-old Ma tradition, all routine activity ceases in the village where the incest occurred. This interdiction, known as *bar poh,* lasts 14 days, suspending all farming, forging, and weaving activities during this period. In addition, the two guilty individuals must sacrifice a buffalo to the local spirits *(yang logar)*, a goat at the trail to water, a duck at the trail to the paddy, a goat at the trail to the taboo woods, and a pig to the spirits of the two homes that have been shamed, as reparation to all persons—intermediaries, chiefs, and master of the land and forest—who have been defiled.[10]

Adultery is also considered unlawful behavior and the traditional Ma law requires the interdiction bar poh. If both the offending parties are married, the male must pay reparation both to his wife and to the husband of the girl. If a husband has betrayed his wife with a young, unmarried girl, both he and the girl must make amends to the wife. When a wife has wronged her husband with a bachelor, both must pay compensation to the husband.[11]

Divorce and Second Marriage

By Ma custom divorce is permitted if the marriage is not consummated because of physical reasons or unwillingness by either partner. In cases of proven adultery or mutual consent, divorce may be granted only after the village elders have failed to reconcile the couple.[12]

The partner judged guilty of causing the divorce must give 15 old jars to his or her partner and must offer a sacrifice—usually a pig and a jar—to the intermediaries who negotiated the divorce with the village elders. According to Ma custom, the intermediaries must be strangers to both families of the couple to be divorced.

After the divorce the father must still partially support the children until they are about 6 years old.[13] Custody of the eldest male child is granted to the father, although the child may remain with the mother while very young.[14]

Polygamy is limited to chiefs and other wealthy Ma. A husband must first obtain the permission of his first wife, then an intermediary takes his proposal to the prospective second wife. If she accepts, the husband goes to her house and sacrifices a jar of rice wine and a chicken, and they may consummate the marriage that night. After a period of 2 days to a month the husband returns to his first wife, and for several months he resides alternately between the two wives. Then the second wife visits the house of the first wife, performs a symbolic act of submission, and offers her services in case of illness. The following day the first wife returns the visit to indicate her good wishes. The second wife washes the face, hands, and feet of the first wife and at nightfall offers a sacrifice consisting of a pig, a chicken, and a jar of wine. Subsequently, the wives exchange gifts, a ritual which signifies that the villagers may begin to celebrate, and that the two wives may now live together with their husband and share his sleeping mat for a few months or indefinitely. If, however, they live in separate quarters, the husband customarily resides 3 months with his second wife and 1 month with his first wife; should he spend more than 1 month in 4 with the first wife, she must pay the second wife a fine.[15]

Death and Burial

Like other Montagnard groups, the Ma attach great significance to funeral rites. A complete ritual—chants, prayers, sacrifices, interdictions, and abstentions—accompanies the burial.

A common Ma belief involves an afterlife where the soul of the deceased continues to lead a lifelike existence. When a death occurs, members of the family handle the body with great care and respect, since they believe that the living soul of the corpse is carefully observing how they treat its earthly form.

Normally the deceased is placed in a coffin during the evening of the second day after death, although actual burial does not occur for another 1 to 7 days. During this interval, the living entertain the dead in a specific and important ritual known as the Boh Chot.[16] A small house and a reproduction of a rice granary, erected at the burial site, serve as a depository for offerings and a place of communication between the living and the souls of the dead. Offerings include goods belonging to the deceased—such as clothing and jewelry—as well as food, cooked rice for immediate consumption, and uncooked rice to sustain the soul in its new home. Specific lamentations and prayers accompany every phase of the funeral ceremony.[17]

Completion of the funeral rite requires a buffalo, pig, or chicken sacrifice. Later the meat is eaten by the living, who believe that numerous spirits and souls of the dead share their feast. Presumably, the soul of the sacrificial animal follows the soul of the deceased into the netherworld.

Variations in the basic funeral ceremony exist among some subgroups of the Ma, who reportedly keep the coffin in the family house for a month, rather than the usual 1 to 7 days. A bamboo tube attached to a jar is inserted into a hole under the coffin; the jar is emptied regularly. When nothing more runs into the jar from the coffin, the body is buried.[18]

Traditionally the Ma feared dying far away from their village, reportedly because the family of the deceased could not recover the body for proper burial.[19]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Ma activities are regulated by numerous customs and taboos. There are prescribed methods and procedures governing everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Ma have passed down these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the Ma are constantly trying to avoid actions, activities, and contacts with objects or animals that they believe might displease the spirits. Tribesmen who are in regular contact with outsiders may not observe their customs and taboos as closely as tribesmen living in greater isolation.

Dress

During the performance of their everyday tasks, the Ma tribesmen generally wear a simple loincloth; but for ceremonial or festive occasions more ornamental clothing is worn.[1] Then, the men wear indigo-colored belts from which dangle red pompons and bells; however, the main item is a white, sleeveless vest with colorfully embroidered borders. Woven into the vest are elaborate patterns representing the scales of pythons, the mouths of leeches, the footprints of monkeys, the feathering of arrows, the teeth of tigers, flowers, palm leaves, peacocks, chickens, turtle shells, and other objects familiar to the tribesmen.

Ma women usually wear a knee- or calf-length skirt of coarse, blanket-like material. A thin belt holds the skirt in place. Generally, the women are barebreasted, but occasionally they may wear a blanket or cloth draped tunic-like around the upper torso.[2]

In addition, both men and women wear glass bead necklaces draped over brass and pewter neck rings, plus earrings and numerous bracelets. Around their legs the women also wear brass wire rings which sometimes extend from the ankle to the upper calf.[3]

Folk Beliefs

Customarily, the Ma designate as sacred certain prominent geographical features, such as nearby patches of forest, waterfalls, mountain tops, or large rocks. These sacred areas are inhabited by the spirits Bri Krong and Bri Yang. Any stranger who may be in Ma territory is responsible and punished if he—even unwittingly—profanes these sacred or taboo areas.[4]

The following incident, witnessed by a missionary who visited a Ma village, is indicative of the way Ma villagers may associate evil with a seemingly harmless object. One night the missionary was awakened by yelling and screaming villagers outside his house. The reason for this demonstration, he learned, was the appearance of a peculiar bird in a tree near the village. Two years earlier, on that same day, a similar bird had been sighted, and five villagers had died of a mysterious disease. Thereafter the villages associated the bird with death. Whenever the bird reappeared the villagers began a ceremony of sacrifices and drinking. The yells and screams, which awakened the missionary, concluded the ceremony intended to drive away the death-bringing spirits embodied in the bird.[5]

The Ma warned another missionary and his relatives to avoid at all times any contact with a wild chicken, for even the accidental touching of its feather or its droppings would result in horrible illness and death. The power of evil spirits was illustrated by another Ma, who related that his father had unwisely used the forbidden great bamboo in building a house; the evil spirits retaliated by taking the lives of the father and three of his children.[6]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Ma are reported to be more reserved than some of the other Montagnard groups.[7] Although contacts with other tribes have become more frequent in recent years, with the probable decrease of Ma suspicion regarding strangers, it is doubtful that they trust any stranger prior to a period of careful evaluation. Apparently a meal of pork liver shared between a Ma chief and a stranger (and possibly with other members of the village) is part of a ritual designed officially to elevate the stranger to the status of friend or ally of the chief and, therefore, of the village itself.[8]

There was no indication in the available information of recent attacks on strangers by Ma tribesmen. Nevertheless, past experience would indicate that, when provoked, the Ma might resort to violence if the odds and omens were favorable. In addition to direct attack, the Ma can be provoked by the violation of a taboo, or by the profanation of a sacred place—accidental or deliberate.

Customs Relating to Animals

In addition to the specific taboos against eating the flesh of particular animals which apply to an individual, family, or village, there are reportedly many distinctive customs relating to animals. Like other tribes in the Republic of Vietnam, the Ma regard the tiger (more common to the Ma area than to other areas) with awe and trepidation, believing it has special powers.

The domestic animals kept by the Ma—buffaloes, goats, pigs, chickens—are raised primarily for ceremonial or sacrifical purposes, rather than for food, although during a ceremony or sacrifice, the sacrificial animal is eaten.

A Ma's wealth is measured by the number of buffaloes he owns or has sacrificed.

Traditionally, one tribesman was usually designated to guard the village animals. If an animal died or disappeared due to negligence while under his care he reimbursed the owner. If, however, the animal's death was due to another cause, the guard presented the horns and freshly cut ears to the owner. Failure to perform this formality would require the guard to reimburse the owner for the dead animal.[9]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The Ma religion is animistic and involves the belief that good pirits, yang, and evil spirits, *ca,* inhabit the lands, animals, trees, nd objects. According to Ma tradition, a supreme spirit, N'duh, reated all things.[1]

The Ma have a concept of life after death. The soul of the deeased person is said to enter a "country of the dead," or netherworld, where all things are opposite to existence in the real world. For example, in the netherworld night is day, broken jars are used or drinking, and dull wooden knives are used for cutting.[2]

Principal Religious Holidays

The seasonal rituals associated with clearing fields, planting rice, nd harvesting crops are based upon Ma religious beliefs and pracices. The New Year in the spring, probably their most important eligious holiday, includes a ritual marking the beginning of the nnual agricultural cycle.[3] During this ritual each family sacrifices chicken in the family granary. Then the paddy, the pillars and doors of the granary, and the house are anointed with a mixture of he chicken blood, scraps of banyan bark and lianas, earth from a ermite mound, and rice wine. This anointing mixture is also ubbed on the chest of each member of the family. For three nights the villagers drink and celebrate, and each is presented with New Year's gift of a small package of rice.

Religious Ceremonies

Sacrifice is the principal religious ritual among the Ma; its purpose is to calm offended spirits and to appeal to the spirits for a good rop.

Choosing the time for a sacrifice is a ritual in itself. Villagers go to the sacred forest, pick pieces of rattan, and count every fold or crease, each of which represents one night. Thus they learn rom the spirits the date for the next sacrifice.[4]

A ritual sacrifice is a colorful spectacle which may last several days. The men don feather headdresses and loincloths decorated with red pompons and carry gracefully curved machetes or scythes; he women wear bright skirts with elaborate patterns and glitterng brass hairpins.[5] Each family is represented by a *pua,* or holy man, who acts as intermediary between the family and the spirits.[6] Before the ceremonies begin, buffaloes—the principal sacrificial offering—are tied to stakes. The pua gather around a jar secured to one of the hearth posts to invoke the spirits.[7] They then go into the heart of the forest to visit the *krong* spirits who live there. During this ritual the pua sprinkle chicken blood and several drops of fermented rice wine on the stump of a large tree. Brandishing their machetes and waving their drinking straws, they summon the krong and the yang to participate in the village ceremony. The pua return to the village, each carrying over his head a shrub which is then attached to the hindquarters of a buffalo.

Meanwhile in the village the people make final preparations for the rites. Through divination and by the use of a knotted string, they choose a girl to greet the spirit guests. The first guests, the krong spirits, are welcomed by fifes, gongs, and horns; later the yang are greeted by essence of sandalwood perfume.

At sunrise the next morning, the sacrifice is performed. Drums and gongs are sounded, and a cock is sacrificed on the veranda of each house. Then the buffaloes are stabbed with knives and a spear is thrust into their right side. When a buffalo breaks loose and is killed trying to escape, the omens are considered to be unfavorable; hence the supplemental sacrifice of pigs is necessary to assuage the krong.[8]

Whenever a ricefield is opened for cultivation, a buffalo is sacrificed. First, the animal is led through the field to bless it, then the *po u* or master of the land wounds the beast repeatedly with his machete; finally, the liturgical posts are anointed with buffalo blood and the villagers commence feasting.[9]

An agreement between two villages for the division of a forest area is another important occasion calling for a sacrifice.[10]

Religious Practitioners

The Ma recognize both good and evil sorcerers. They believe good sorcerers (canang) can cure illness with incantations and herbal medicines, while bad sorcerers *(cau* or *caa)* eat the soul *(sa soan)* of the person they wish to harm.[11]

The Ma believe they can differentiate between a good and a bad sorcerer. When a sorcerer makes strange incantations, or acts in an unusual way, or possesses strange talismans, he is suspected of being an evil sorcerer. If a Ma becomes ill or dies after having been threatened by a sorcerer, or if a well-known healer extracts strange objects from the body of a suspected evil sorcerer, the sorcerer is completely incriminated. Reportedly a person suspected of witchcraft or evil sorcery must undergo a trial by ordeal to prove his innocence.[12]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Ma economy is based on rice cultivation, supplemented by fishing, hunting, ironworking, cloth and basket weaving, pottery making, canoe making, and trade. In the bottom land along the riverbanks, rice is cultivated by the wet-rice method (irrigated paddies) ; on the slopes, the slash-and-burn method is used.[1]

Common to all the highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam, the slash-and-burn method of cultivation involves cutting down, during the winter months, all vegetation in the new area and burning it to clear the fields. The ashes produced serve as fertilizer, which permits crops to be grown for 3 to 4 years. When the fields no longer support a crop, the village moves to a new area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle; then the village repeats the slash-and-burn clearing process in the new area.[2]

Rice sowing, in both the dry fields and the wet paddies, starts shortly before the rainy season. The men walk through the cleared field making holes at regular intervals with one or two pointed sticks; then the women follow, dropping a few grains of rice into each hole.[3] Cotton is planted among the clusters of rice paddies in the dry fields.

While the rice crop is ripening, the Ma subsist on fish, which abound in the Da Dung River. Ma tribesmen are said to be good fishermen, skilled in the use of fishhooks *(ndar)*, harpoons *(corah)*, and casting nets *(jaal)*.[4]

Special Arts and Skills

After the rice is harvested, the women pick the cotton, boil it in large pots, and then spread it out to dry in the sun. When the cotton is dry, it is carded on racks *(tok)*, stretched and twisted on spindles *(khong)* and finally wound on bobbins *(sonar tany brae)*. Then some cotton threads are dyed indigo or red and woven very slowly and tightly onto a frame *(bono bosa)*. By this method, approximately one yard of cloth can be woven in a month.[5]

The Ma are particularly noted for the designs and colors used in their weaving. Many other Montagnard tribes weave cloth, using designs with little contrasting color.[6] The Ma, however, like sharp, contrasting colors in intricate designs. They specialize in making blankets, some of which have alternating red and dark blue stripes, although many different styles are utilized.[7]

The Ma also embroider their white tunics with colored thread and sew red fringe on their long indigo belts.[8] The most elaborate designs in fabrics are woven in the Ma villages on the left bank of the Da Dung River.[9]

Besides cloth weaving, the Ma women also are skilled weavers of traps, fans of bamboo, and rattan.[10]

The Ma in the villages of Bun Gor, Bun Pang, and Bun Rdy collect clay from the Da Kluho River which the women then mould by hand into very evenly shaped pots. Then the pots are polished with a damp cloth, dried in the sun, and baked over glowing embers. Finally, the pots are filled with a concoction made from tree bark and boiled for 2 days—a process producing a stain that turns the pots black.[11]

The villagers on the banks of the Da Dung have learned to make strong canoes by hollowing out tree trunks with an ax. An even thickness is obtained by putting identical iron pegs in the bark for measuring guides. A fire is built in the hollow trunk until the wood is charred; then it is filled with water and left standing for several days to make the wood more pliable.[12]

The Ma also fabricate kites of forest materials for their children.[13]

The Ma on the Bao Lac Plateau have ironsmiths who make tools, weapons, and ornaments. In addition, the ironsmith has a quasi-religious role and is frequently consulted as a soothsayer.[14]

Trade With Other Groups

The prevalence of crafts among the Ma results in a good deal of local trade, as well as trade with outsiders. Blankets, tunics, and belts are woven primarily for sale to the Vietnamese for money, which the Ma promptly spend on alcohol or imported cotton goods.[15] The Ma frequently trade with the Vietnamese at the markets of Di Linh, Bao Lac, or Da Lat.[16]

Neighboring tribes with an abundance of rice trade their surpluses for Ma blankets and clothes; the villages specializing in canoe building trade their products with other river-bank dwellers for rice, blankets, jars, and occasionally piasters.[17]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The Ma have no overall tribal political structure; their highest form of political organization is the autonomous village, which may occasionally cooperate or form an alliance with a neighboring village.[1]

The basic political unit of the Ma is the extended family, consisting of 10 to 20 nuclear families (husband, wife, and unmarried children), living in the same longhouse and presided over by the eldest male member.[2]

A chief provides the principal leadership within a Ma village. He represents the village to outsiders, leads war parties, and presides at sacrifices. To become a chief, a Ma must belong to a family of influence. Considered the guardian of Ma custom, a chief must be versed in the tradition of the Ma—the sole framework of the tribe—and must also possess potions which guarantee power and wisdom. Frequently he is skilled in a noble craft, such as making canoes or forging arms.[3]

The chief is advised and assisted by a council of elders, usually consisting of the household chiefs and family heads who are familiar with traditional law and custom. Whenever necessary, the council of elders will meet to deliberate on problems confronting the village.[4]

Under the French colonial administration, a French-appointed functionary selected from the village acted as the liaison between the French and the tribesmen, in addition to the chief chosen by the villagers. He was responsible for the initiation of French tribal programs, tax collection, and the communication of French decrees to the villagers.

Following the departure of the French, the Diem regime attempted to politically and socially integrate the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam. Officially, the Central Government handles relations between tribal villages; Government representatives deal with groups of seven or eight villages, while the villages themselves are represented by their village chiefs.[5]

Legal System

The Ma have a very intricate legal system: laws are transmitted orally from generation to generation and are expressed by taboos and sanctions known and respected by all the tribespeople. Disputes and punishment for violations are the concern of both family and village. The household chief administers justice and arbitrates disputes among the members of the extended family. The village chief and the council of elders, however, must always be informed of his actions: in the event of a serious violation, they will assume jurisdiction. Ultimately all the members of an extended family are responsible for any misdemeanors committed by its members.

Most laws are enforced by economic sanctions, which differ according to the offense and vary from village to village. In general, an individual Ma will pay as much of a judgment against him as possible, and the remainder becomes his family's responsibility.[6]

Disputes among the Ma are settled either by discussion and deliberation or by arms. When a quarrel occurs, the two adversaries agree on a judge, who is usually a village elder. Intermediaries or advocates, men well grounded in Ma tradition, are then selected by each party. A minor dispute may be discussed at the home of one of the contending parties; however, if the matter is serious, the village chief summons the two disputants to a meeting on neutral ground in the forest. After a ritual invocation, the two parties sit on a bamboo trunk and argue their cases.[7]

When general hearings of grievances are held in Ma villages, a group of tribespeople go from house to house announcing that amicable discussions are open to those wishing to settle disputes.[8]

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established by the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences which could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[9]

Under the French, cases which could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[10] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas.

Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[11]

Village custom law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[12] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[13]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[14]

At the national level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[15]

Subversive Influences

Their isolation and marginal subsistence make the Ma susceptible to the subversive activities of the Viet Cong. The primary objective of the subversive elements is to win the allegiance of the Ma and to turn the tribesmen into an active, hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals. Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the next phase is an intensive propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Then individuals are recruited, trained, and assigned to various Viet Cong support or combat units.

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror, which usually results in passive resistance to the Government or active support for the Viet Cong.[16]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Ma area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning Ma familiarity with or access to radios. Any radios in operation in the Ma area were probably brought in by military personnel.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Ma dialect might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

Written communication would probably have little direct effect on the Ma, since the tribe does not have a written language and very few of the tribesmen can read French or Vietnamese. The few literate tribesmen could, however, be expected to communicate information in written materials to the rest of the tribespeople. Data about the successful use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Ma should be oriented around the principle of improving conditions in the tribal villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against Viet Cong harassment are some possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the Ma. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the chief and tribal elders in order to show respect for the tribal political structure. The tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Most Ma tribesmen would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained; the Ma resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Ma tribespeople into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote central government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should as far as possible, be observable, measurable, and tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Ma encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
   b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
   e. Insect and rodent control.
   f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   c. Construction of motion picture facilities.
   d. Construction of radio broadcasting and receiving stations and public speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   a. Improve village sanitation.
   b. Provide safe water supply systems.
   c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   a. Provide basic literacy training.
   b. Provide rudimentary vocational training.
   c. Present information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.
   d. Provide basic citizenship training.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Ma can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen can serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Ma can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership, they can be organized into effective counterguerrilla combat units.

In the past, the Ma were considered capable fighters, whether fighting offensively in raids against other groups or defensively within their villages.

Hostile Activity Toward the Ma and Tribal Reaction

When psychological pressures to win Ma support fail, the Viet Cong have resorted to outright brutality and terror. Frequently, the Ma yield and cooperate with the Viet Cong; without Government training and support, they do not have the wherewithal to oppose the Viet Cong. Ma villages have no organization for defense except those equipped, trained, and organized by the Government. Ma villages with adequate training and support will defend themselves and will occasionally initiate aggressive action against the Viet Cong.

The inclination of the Ma to fight aggressively is one that must be developed and supported with modern weapons and training. They defend themselves vigorously when they, their families, or their villages are threatened and when they have adequate resources and chance for success.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

In the past, the Ma relied upon crossbows, spears, and long knives. Nearly every Ma tribesman is equipped with a machete, a long, iron-bladed weapon with a curved handle that fits over his shoulder so that it may be easily carried. They often carry round wooden shields or *khel*. Fashioned from a tree trunk, these shields are decorated with circles and triangles symbolizing tiger teeth, fish, and the kapok flower.[1] The Ma also are familiar with the use of traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks used as foot traps.

The tribesmen who received military training from the French are familiar with modern weapons.

Their relatively small stature limits the weapons the Ma can use, but they are proficient in handling light weapons such as the AR.15 rifle, the Thompson submachinegun, and the carbine. The tribesmen are less proficient in the use of the M-1 or the Browning Automatic Rifle, although they can handle larger weapons which can be disassembled, carried by two or more men, and then quickly reassembled.

The Ma pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery or traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Ma can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well.

The Ma cannot handle sophisticated devices—such as mortars, explosives, and mines—as proficiently as hand weapons. They find the more abstract and technical aspects of such weapons—such as timing trajectories—difficult to absorb.

Ability To Absorb Military Instruction

The Ma can absorb basic military training and concepts. Their natural habitat gives them an excellent background for tracking and ambush activities; they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle.

The Ma learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

Some Ma, veterans of service with the French, are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE MA

Every action of the Ma tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Ma may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Ma are listed below:

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Ma village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Ma. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Ma tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some credit for civic action projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Ma should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter

a house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.

4. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Ma ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
5. An outsider should never enter a Ma house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
6. Outsiders should not get involved with Ma women.
7. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not mock Ma religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of tribal life.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Ma property and village animals with respect. Any damages to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Ma dialect. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Jean Boulbet, "Quelques aspects du coutumier (N'dri) des Cau Maa," *Bulletin de la Societe des Etudes Indochinoises,* XXXII (1957), p. 116.
2. Frank M. LeBar, *et al., Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 153.
3. H. C. Darby (ed.) *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 82–84; Jean Boulbet, "Description de la vegetation en pays Ma," *Bulletin de la Societe des Etudes Indochinoises,* XXXV (1960), pp. 545–74; Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, August 1965. (Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.)

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 6; Dam Bo (Jacques Dournes), "Les Populations montagnardes de Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), p. 963.
3. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.,* p. 162.
4. *Ibid.,* pp. 123, 133; Henri Maitre, *Les Jungles Moi* (Paris: Emile Larose, 1912), pp. 427–33, 461–62.
5. Dam Bo, *op. cit.,* p. 973; Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.,* pp. 120–33; Maitre, p. *op. cit.,* p. 308.
6. Maitre, *op. cit.,* p. 308.
7. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.,* p. 122; Jean Boulbet, "Modes et techniques du pays Ma," *Bulletin de la Societe des Etudes Indochinoises,* XXXIX (1964), p. 271; Jacques Dournes, *En suivant la piste des hommes sur les hauts-plateaux du Viet-Nam* (Paris: Rene Juillard, 1955), p. 40.
8. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.,* pp. 268–69.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Dournes, *op. cit.,* p. 40.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Dournes, *op. cit.,* pp. 44, 102.
2. *Ibid.;* Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.,* p. 122; Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.,* p. 240; Dam Bo, *op. cit.,* p. 994.
3. Darby, *op. cit.,* pp. 110–14.
4. *Ibid.,* pp. 114–16.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
6. Dournes, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
7. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–13.
8. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 163.
9. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1159–61.
10. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 124.
11. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 994.
12. Jean Boulbet, "Bo'rde au rendez-vous des genies," *Bulletin de la Societe des Études Indochinoises*, XXXV (1960), pp. 627–50; John Newman, "Journey to the Red Tassel Ma," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIV (Winter 1961), p. 1–4.
13. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 996.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 155.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 154–55.
3. Dournes, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 102.
4. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 256, 259.
5. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 150.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
7. Paul P. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum* (Hanoi: L'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952), pp. 348–49.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
9. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, pp. 150–61.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 161–62.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
12. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, pp. 363–64.
13. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 160.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
15. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, pp. 363–64.
16. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1159–62.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 1166–71.
19. *Ibid.*

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, pp. 120–25, 181, 207–209; Dournes, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, p. 241; Maitre, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
4. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, pp. 162–63.
5. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
6. Harriette Irwin, "Light Shines Into Ma Hearts," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVII (Summer 1963), p. 4.
7. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 994.
8. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 161–62; Boulbet, "Bo'rde," *op. cit.*, pp. 630–31.
9. Jules Canivey, "Notice sur les moeurs et coutumes des Moi de la region de Dalat," *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie*, IV (1913), p. 27.

VI. RELIGION

1. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 170.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
3. Boulbet, "Bo'rde," *op. cit.*, p. 637.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 633.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 627–50.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 630.
7. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, pp. 268–69.
8. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1097.
9. Boulbet, "Bo'rde," *op. cit.*, p. 630.
10. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, pp. 163–65.
11. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
12. *Ibid.*

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, pp. 117–24.
2. Gerald C. Hickey, "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965), pp. 1–5.
3. Marcel Ner, "Les Moi du Haut-Donnai," *Extreme-Asie*, LXXIX (August 1933), p. 338.
4. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, pp. 193, 205.
5. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 994; Dournes, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
6. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, p. 184.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
8. Dournes, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–71.
9. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, p. 183.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 183–261; Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 124.
13. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, p. 182.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 219; Dournes, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
15. Dournes, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
16. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, p. 182.
17. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 996–97.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, pp. 140–41.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 155; Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
3. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, pp. 140–41.
4. Boulbet, "Bo'rde," *op. cit.*, p. 645.
5. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 2.
6. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, pp. 140–41; Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 174; Canivey, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
7. Boulbet, "Quelques aspects," *op. cit.*, p. 126.
8. Boulbet, "Bo'rde," *op. cit.*, p. 645.
9. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
10. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Michigan State University Advisory Group, 1957), pp. 20–21.

11. Hickey, "Comments," *op. cit.*, p. 1.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Boulbet, "Modes et techniques," *op. cit.*, pp. 227–29.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE MA

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adele. *Renseignements recueillis sur les coutumes des Ma de B'sre.* Archives de la Province du Haut-Donnai, 1932.

Boulbet, Jean. "Bo'rde au rendez-vous des génies," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXV (1960), 627–50.

———. "Description de la végétation en pays Ma," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXV (1960), 544–74.

———. "Modes et techniques du pays Ma," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXIX (1964), 169–300.

———. "Quelques aspects du coutumier (N'dri) des Cau Maa," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXII (1957), 108–78.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Canivey, Jules. "Notice sur les moeurs et coutumes des Moi de la région de Dalat," *Reveue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie,* IV (1913), 1–30.

Cassaigne. "Les Mois de la région de Djiring," *Indochine,* IV (January–June 1943), No. 131, 11–13; No. 132, 13–14.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures 1950). Washington, D. C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Cunhac. *Notice précisant certaines bases du droit coutumier en région moi.* Archives de la Province du Haut-Donnai, 1921.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes de Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Dournes, Jacques. *En suivant la piste des hommes sur les haut-plateaux du Viet-Nam.* Paris: René Julliard, 1955.

———. "La Religion des Montagnards du Haut-Donnai," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXIV (1949), 33–49.

———. "Structure sociale des Montagnards du Haut-Donnai: Tribu des riziculteurs," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXIII (1948), 101–06.

Guilleminet, Paul P. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum.* Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa

Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Michigan State University Advisory Group, 1957.

Irwin, Harriette. "Light Shines Into Ma Hearts," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVII (Summer 1963), 2–4.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. August 1965. (Ph. D. candidate at Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.)

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

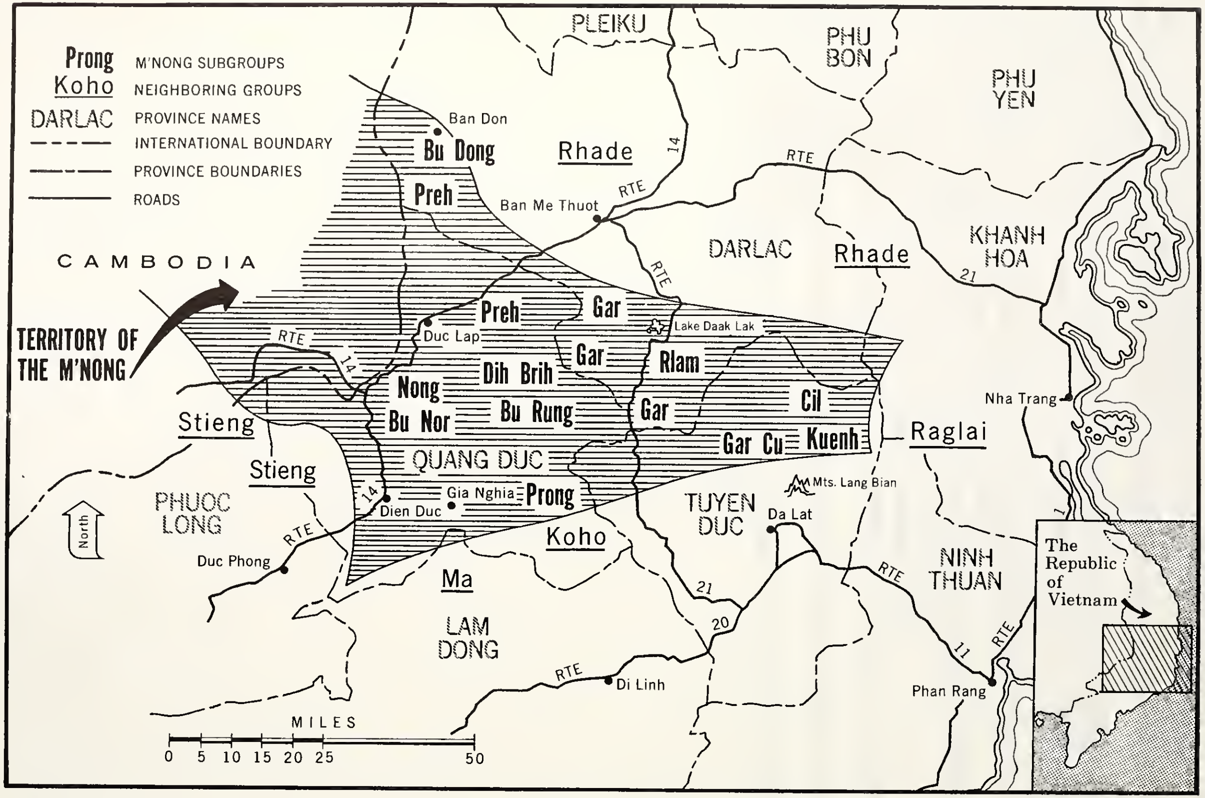
Leroi-Gourhan, André, and Poirer, Jean. *Ethnologie de l'Union Française*, tome second. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

Ner, Marcel. "Les Moi du Haut-Donnai," *Extrême-Asie*, LXXIX (August 1933), 335–50.

Newman, John. "Journey to the Red Tassel Ma," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIV (Winter 1961), 1–4.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.


Prong M'NONG SUBGROUPS
Koho NEIGHBORING GROUPS
DARLAC PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
CAMBODIA
TERRITORY OF THE M'NONG
PLEIKU
PHU BON
PHU YEN
KHANH HOA
DARLAC
Rhade
Rhade
Ban Don
Bu Dong
Preh
Ban Me Thuot
RTE
14
RTE
RTE
21
Preh
Gar
Lake Daak Lak
Duc Lap
Gar
Rlam
Dih Brih
Nong
Bu Nor
Bu Rung
Gar
Cil
Gar Cu
Kuenh
Nha Trang
Raglai
QUANG DUC
Gia Nghia
Prong
Dien Duc
14
Mts. Lang Bian
TUYEN DUC
Da Lat
Koho
Ma
Stieng
Stieng
PHUOC LONG
Duc Phong
North
LAM DONG
RTE
Di Linh
21
20
NINH THUAN
RTE
11
RTE
Phan Rang
The Republic of Vietnam
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50

The M'nong Subgroups

CHAPTER 12. THE M'NONG

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The M'nong are one of the smaller Montagnard groups of the Republic of Vietnam. Divided into five distinct subgroups, the M'nong inhabit the militarily important western sector of the mountainous Darlac Plateau adjacent to the Republic of Vietnam-Cambodia border. Of Mon-Khmer ethnic stock, the M'nong speak a language related to that of the Ma and the Stieng, other highland groups that border on the M'nong area.

The M'nong are a matrilineal group and live in villages which, individually, form the highest level of political organization they have attained. The M'nong have a subsistence economy based primarily on the slash-and-burn cultivation of rice, although some of the M'nong subgroups engage in wet-rice agriculture. The M'nong also engage in hunting, fishing, and a limited amount of trade.

The M'nong are an intensely religious people who believe they live in constant interaction with animistic spirits. The M'nong have a reputation for belligerence and until recently have remained comparatively isolated from outside influence.

Name and Size of Group

The M'nong population has been estimated at between 15,000 and 40,000: South Vietnamese estimates tend toward the lower figure; North Vietnamese estimates, toward the higher. The discrepancy can perhaps be accounted for by the considerable number of M'nong who live in Cambodia, believed by a recent source to be about 15,000.[1]

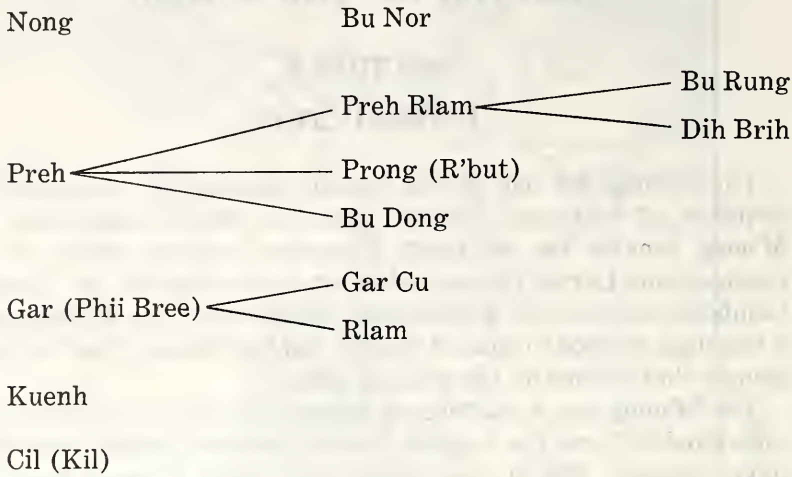
Although clear distinctions among M'nong subgroups are difficult to establish, certain locales and tribal subdivisions have been fairly well identified. Anthropologists generally agree on five major subgroups of the M'nong: the Nong or Dih, the Preh, the Gar or Phii Bree, the Cil or Kil,* and the Kuenh.[2] Several of these major subgroups have further divisions within them.

The Bu Nor are related to the Nong. There are three related groups within the Preh subgroup: the Preh Rlam, the Prong, or R'but, and the Bu Dong. The Preh Rlam, in turn, comprise the Bu Rung and Dih Brih groups. The Gar contain two related groups: The Gar Cu and the Rlam. No subdivisions have been reported within the Cil and Kuenh.[3]

---

* The M'nong Cil (Kil) are not to be confused with the Koho group called Kil. See note on page 389 of chapter 10: The Koho.

The M'nong: Major Subgroups and Related Groups



Location

The M'nong live south and west of Ban Me Thuot and inhabit parts of the provinces of Darlac, Quang Duc, and Tuyen Duc. A large number of M'nong live across the border in southern Cambodia. There are also a few scattered M'nong villages in the provinces of Phuoc Long and Khanh Hoa.

The villages of the Gar dot the banks of the Krong River, which flows westward from the Annamite Mountains through rugged mountain terrain and then into rolling hills. The Gar also inhabit the higher lands to the north and south of this area.[4] The Gar Cu inhabit the higher mountains near Lang Bian Mountain, north of Dalat. The Rlam group of the Gar occupy the swampy lowlands around Lake Daak Lak.

The Preh and Preh Rlam inhabit the area west of Lake Daak Lak. The Dih Brih and Bu Rung groups of the Preh Rlam are located west and southwest of the lake. The Bu Dong group of the Preh live in several villages in the Ban Don area near the Srepok River, northwest of Ban Me Thuot. The Prong live in the region of the High Donnai, east of Gia Nghia. The name High Donnai designates the upper reaches of the Dongnai River, which flows west from its source near Dalat, through Quang Duc Province, and then turns south toward Saigon.

The Nong and Bu Nor inhabit the area southwest of Lake Daak

Lak near the Cambodian border. The Kuenh subgroup is found in the Lang Bian area, southeast of the Rlam and east of the Gar.[5] The Cil inhabit an area northeast of Dalat, between the Lat subgroup of the Koho tribe and the northern Raglai.[6]

The M'nong groups have as neighbors the Kpa, Ktul, K'drao, and Blo subgroups of the Rhade to the north; the Raglai to the east; various Koho groups to the south (the Ma, Tring, Lat and Rien) and the Stieng in the southwest. In the west, numerous Cambodian tribal peoples are the neighbors of the M'nong.

Terrain Analysis

The numerous M'nong groups are thinly dispersed over an area of high mountains, low-lying marshes and bogs, and verdant forests. South of the town of Ban Me Thuot is Lake Daak Lak, lying in a broad depression covered with marshes. Into this area flows the Srepok or Krong River from the Annamite Mountains in the east. The ample water supply to this flatland makes it suitable for irrigation and wet-rice cultivation.[7] South of Lake Daak Lak, the high granite and volcanic rock mountains of the Lang Bian area rise to an altitude of roughly 6,000 feet.[3]

South of the Srepok River, between Lake Daak Lak and the Cambodian border, is an area consisting mostly of tropical forest which extends south to the High Donnai. Averaging 1.6 persons per square kilometer, this forest area has few sections where the population density reaches seven persons per square kilometer. The more populated sections are southward, near the edge of the High Donnai, where the fertility of the land improves somewhat, especially in the valleys. The High Donnai itself is virtually uninhabited.

The monsoon forest of the M'nong area is open and generally easily traversed during the dry season. Usually from November through March—the dry season—the vegetation turns brown, and the trees lose their leaves. Then, from about April through mid-September, the rainfall gradually increases, reaching a maximum during July and August. The southwest monsoon of the wet summer season then slowly gives way to the northeast monsoon of the dry winter months. Even during the summer, however, strong, dry summer winds may result in excessive evaporation.[9]

The soil in the M'nong area is generally poor. As a result, except in the lowland marshes, the M'nong practice the swidden, or slash-and-burn, method of cultivation. The term *mir* is used both for this type of cultivation and for the plots of land which are cleared by this method.* After forest land has been cultivated and then abandoned by the M'nong, small plants appear first, then bamboo and wild bananas. Protected by the bamboo, seedling trees thrive in the dense undergrowth, and, within a few years, a new forest begins to develop. During the dry season, however, fires are frequent and both the number and kinds of trees are reduced; only trees most resistant to fire survive, and seedlings and saplings become increasingly sparse. In the mature forest, much of the undergrowth is made up of a tall, coarse grass *(imperata cylindrica)* called *tranh* in Vietnam. Animals graze on the grass when it is young; when it turns dry and yellow, the M'nong use it to thatch their huts.

---

* See "Economic Organization," p. 507.

Although sparsely inhabited by human beings, these forests abound in animals—monkeys, rabbits, deer, tigers, and elephants. In the mountains of Lang Bian, tigers are especially numerous.[10]

There are few good roads in the territory of the M'nong. Travel is easier during the dry season, but four-wheel-drive vehicles are almost a necessity. Even with a Jeep or Land Rover, secondary roads become impassible during the wet season.[11] Two national highways, Route 14 and Route 20, pass through the M'nong area, but travel on these roads is often hazardous due to Viet Cong activities.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

The M'nong are grouped with the Mon-Khmer peoples by culture, language, and physical appearance. The Mon-Khmer ethnic stock is believed to have originated in the upper valleys of the Mekong River in Yunnan Province of southern China.[1]

Language

The M'nong language belongs to the Mon-Khmer language family. Mon-Khmer languages are also spoken by the Ma, Koho, Sedang, Stieng, Bahnar, and Jeh tribes in the Republic of Vietnam. The M'nong language is entirely different, however, from the Malayo-Polynesian languages spoken by the neighboring Rhade and Jarai tribes.[2]

Most M'nong subgroups have their own dialects, but these dialects are basically similar and mutually intelligible. The Gar is the only subgroup with a dialect not easily understood by the other M'nong groups.[3]

In spite of the variety of dialects among the M'nong, they are understood, to a greater or lesser degree, by many neighboring groups with whom they trade. Others who know the M'nong dialects are Vietnamese Government officials who have been in the region, former officials of the French administration in the M'nong area, and some members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The extent of their trade contacts determines the M'nong knowledge of other languages. Members of the Prong group, located near the High Donnai, are said to know some Koho dialects. The Rlam, neighbors of the Rhade tribe, can speak the Rhade language; many of them reportedly speak it almost as well as their own. Bu Dong tribesmen are said to be able to talk with members of the Jarai, Rhade Kpa, and Rhade A'dham and, to some degree, with bordering tribes in Laos and Cambodia. Some Stieng apparently can understand M'nong dialects.

The M'nong had no written language before the arrival of Christian missionaries. The tribesmen have a legend to explain this. Once long ago, all peoples went to a certain place to get their written language. When the M'nong received their language, inscribed on a buffalo hide, they returned to their village and left the buffalo hide hanging on the porch of a hut. That night, while they were asleep, some dogs came and ate the buffalo hide; thus, the M'nong have no written language. Since the 1940's the M'nong have had increasing exposure to a written language developed by missionary groups: The Christian and Missionary Alliance has translated parts of the Bible and some 50 to 60 hymns into a M'nong dialect.[5] In addition, the Viet Cong have prepared propaganda leaflets and other printed matter in the M'nong language and distributed them among tribesmen.

Legendary History

As old tribesmen relate the M'nong legend about the origin of the world, in the beginning, the world was covered with flat rock. There was nothing on the world but rock, and man and the other creatures lived under the rock. One day a man called Tum Nduu and his wife followed a dog chasing a wild animal through a long tunnel. They soon found themselves on the surface of the world; they looked at the flat rock and then returned to their home underground. There they scooped up some earth, gathered seven earthworms and a basket of seeds, and took them to the surface, where they scattered them on the rock before returning home again. Some time later they came back to the surface and found it covered with soil and vegetation; whereupon, Tum Nduu and his wife went home again, gathered together all the animals, and led them, two by two, to the surface of the world to live.*

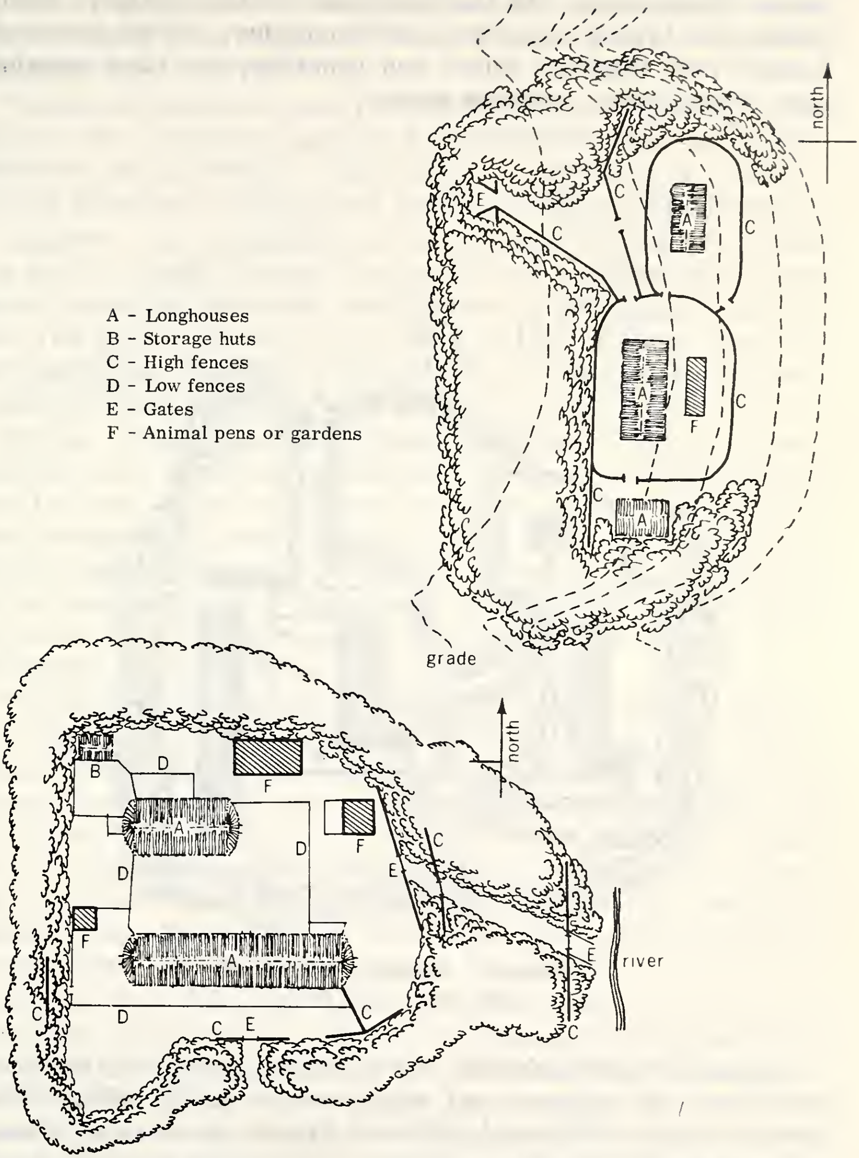
In those early days, the sky was very close to the earth—so close, in fact, that trees and bamboo could not grow very tall, and the moon was very close and hot. One day a tall man took a pole to pound the kernels from rice; while moving the pole, he accidentally pushed the sky up to where it now is.

Life was wonderful and perfect in those days. Men and animals lived together and talked with each other. Then a great catastrophe came; some say it was a huge flood. After that, men ceased living with the animals and talking with them; they have lived separately ever since.[6]

> In the beginning of time there was only one country of dirt, the country of *Nduu* and *Ndoh.*
>
> In the beginning of time there was only one country of earthworms, only seven crawled on it.
>
> In the beginning of time there was only one country of bamboo shoots; a single clump of bamboo grew there.
>
> In the beginning of time there was only one country with wild vegetables; they covered only one plot of ground.[7]

---

* See "Religion," p. 504.



A - Longhouses
B - Storage huts
C - High fences
D - Low fences
E - Gates
F - Animal pens or gardens
north
A
C
E
F
grade
north
B
D
river

Figure 28. M'nong village layout.

Factual History

Because of M'nong isolation until recent years, there is little information about their history. They are reputedly fierce fighters and in the past, a number of European travelers were massacred in the M'nong area. In the early part of this century, Henri Maitre, the French explorer and ethnographer, and his escort of soldiers were attacked, killed, and beheaded, and their remains were thrown into a common grave.[8]

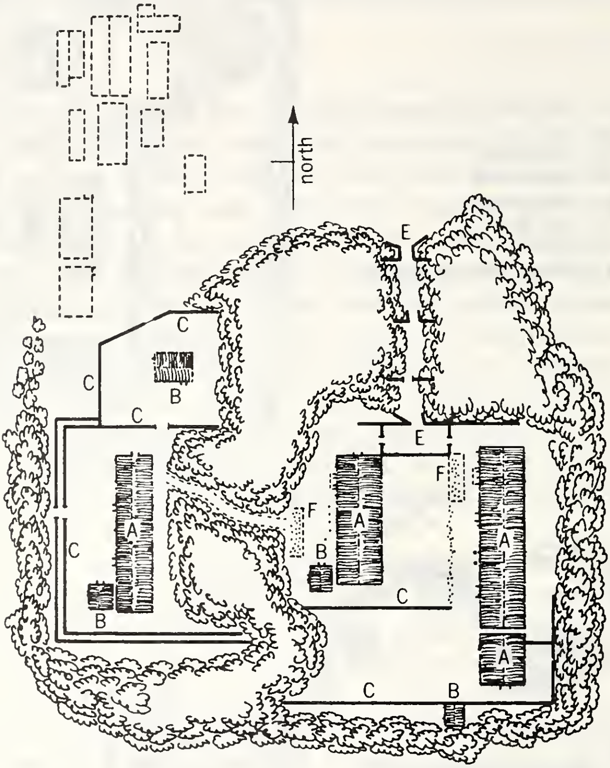


Figure 29. M'nong village layout.
(see key on page 481)

Generally, the French were able to pacify the M'nong, and they even used the tribesmen as militiamen to pacify other tribal groups.[9] In the 1930's and 1940's the French placed some M'nong in regional administrative positions. In 1943, for example, Truu-Hgu, a member of the M'nong tribe, was appointed District Chief of the High Krong Kno region.[10]

Settlement Patterns

In the course of their 20-year cycle of "eating the forest" by shifting the mirs annually,* the M'nong move entire villages approximately every 7 years. The M'nong place a claim to a particular village site by erecting statues of the spirit Prah Ba in front of their houses. When the village is moved, these statues are left behind to indicate that this particular piece of ground has been used by a particular village and that the village's rights regarding its use must be observed.[11]

Control of the annual move rests in the hands of village religious figures, who determine, according to the will of the spirits, suitable locations for cultivation and for the construction of villages. Omens appearing in dreams may also be a factor in these decisions.

Recently, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam moved the people of some M'nong villages to newly constructed fortified areas, where the tribesmen would be secure from harassment by the Viet Cong. However, these new fortified villages were destroyed by the Viet Cong, and the M'nong returned to their former mode of village life.[12]

M'nong villages take their names from their founders or from nearby rivers, waterfalls, vegetables, or animals. The settlements and the type of houses constructed by the M'nong groups vary from one group to another depending upon the terrain, the climate, and the special customs of the group. Generally, the M'nong construct long, rectangular houses situated on the ground instead of on pilings. The Rlam, however, who inhabit a low marshy area, build their houses on pilings.[13]

The first step in choosing a site for a M'nong house is to find a place with no taboos. The head of the future house goes to sleep there; holding in his hands a figurine of the earth spirit, Nglar Nguec, hoping that the spirit will reveal its will in a dream. If the dream is unfavorable, he looks for another location.[14] If the dream is favorable, construction is begun by clearing a little area and planting clumps of a magic plant, called *gun*, taken from the previous village location. Associated with magical practices, gun is grown in a special area in each village.

At the site of the new house, a buffalo horn is placed in an east–west direction and fastened to the ground by forked branches cut from the *jirang* tree. The end of one of these branches is split; a tin bracelet and some leaves from the gun plant are fastened in the split. Again, the head of the new house retires in the hope that his dreams will convey a sign from the spirits. To dream of fruits, rice, a tomb, hunting, or swimming is considered a favorable sign; unfavorable signs include dreaming about a buffalo, a fish, or killing a deer. After 3 days, the head of the new

---

* See "Economic Organization," p. 507.

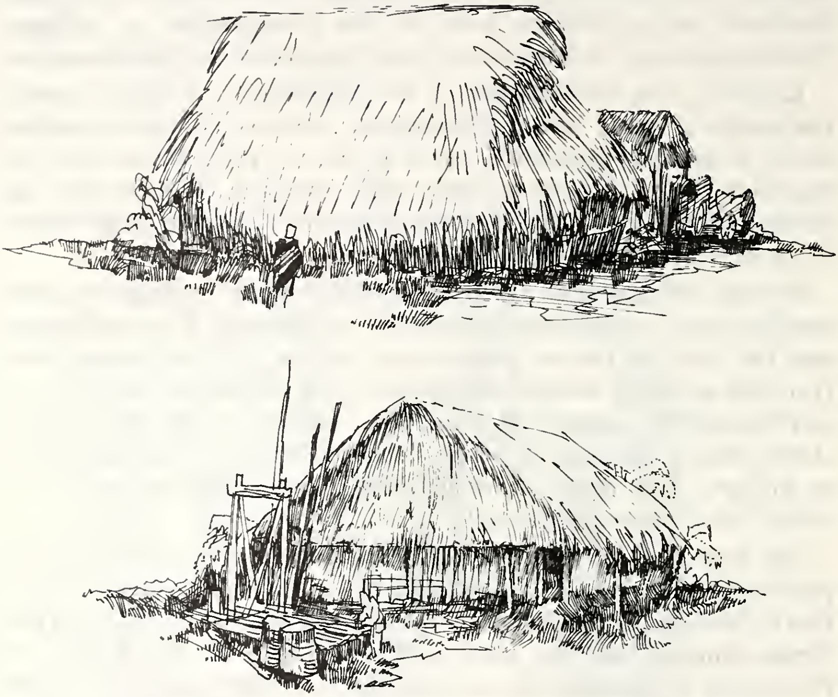


Figure 30. M'nong Gar houses.

house examines the area for signs from the spirits. If all is favorable, then construction begins in earnest.[15]

Inside each M'nong house is a ledge, running the full length of the house, which is used for sleeping, sitting, and for storing goods. The house is divided into compartments for the various family groups of the house, and each compartment is accessible from a central passageway. These compartments are divided by partitions of woven bamboo. Each family has its own hearth, consisting of clay surrounded by a bamboo frame with three stones to support pots. The hearth is moved each time the family moves into a new house; it is a symbol of family solidarity. Hearths are sometimes arranged along the central corridor as well as in the family sections. Since there is no chimney in the roof to let the smoke out, the living quarters are always filled with smoke.

The interior of the house is fairly dark. Lighting is provided by fires in the hearths, light filtering in through the woven bamboo sides, and sunlight coming in through the narrow doors. There are no windows.

Rice wine jars are suspended in braided or net containers from the long crossbars connecting the rafters. Bigger jars are attached to the large columns supporting the roof. As many as 20 or 30 jars may be hung from the crossbars down the long passageway.[16] Crossbows are also hung from the roof supports in the common room near the entrance; the common room also houses gongs and large drums. A crossbeam in the rear of the house is sometimes used to support a little altar used in connection with buffalo sacrifices.[17]

As mentioned, M'nong houses vary from village to village; location of the entrance is one conspicuous variation. Among the Preh, the entrance may be on the long side, while among the Nong, some houses have two entrances.[18] Among some of the Nong and the Prong, houses are constructed on hillsides with one side on the ground and the other side elevated.[19] Influenced by the neighboring Rhade tribe, the Rlam build their houses above the ground on stilts. The orientation of these longhouses, however, is not necessarily north–south, as it is among the Rhade, nor are the M'nong houses as long as those of the Rhade.[20]

At first glance, the Nong house (called *hih* or *jay*) looks like a long haystack approximately 15 or 18 feet wide and about 12 feet high. Varying with the size of the family living in it, the length of the house is rarely less than 30 feet and sometimes approaches 300 feet. The frame of the house is supported by round logs.[21] Since construction of a house has religious implications for the Nong, they choose their sites carefully: they avoid building

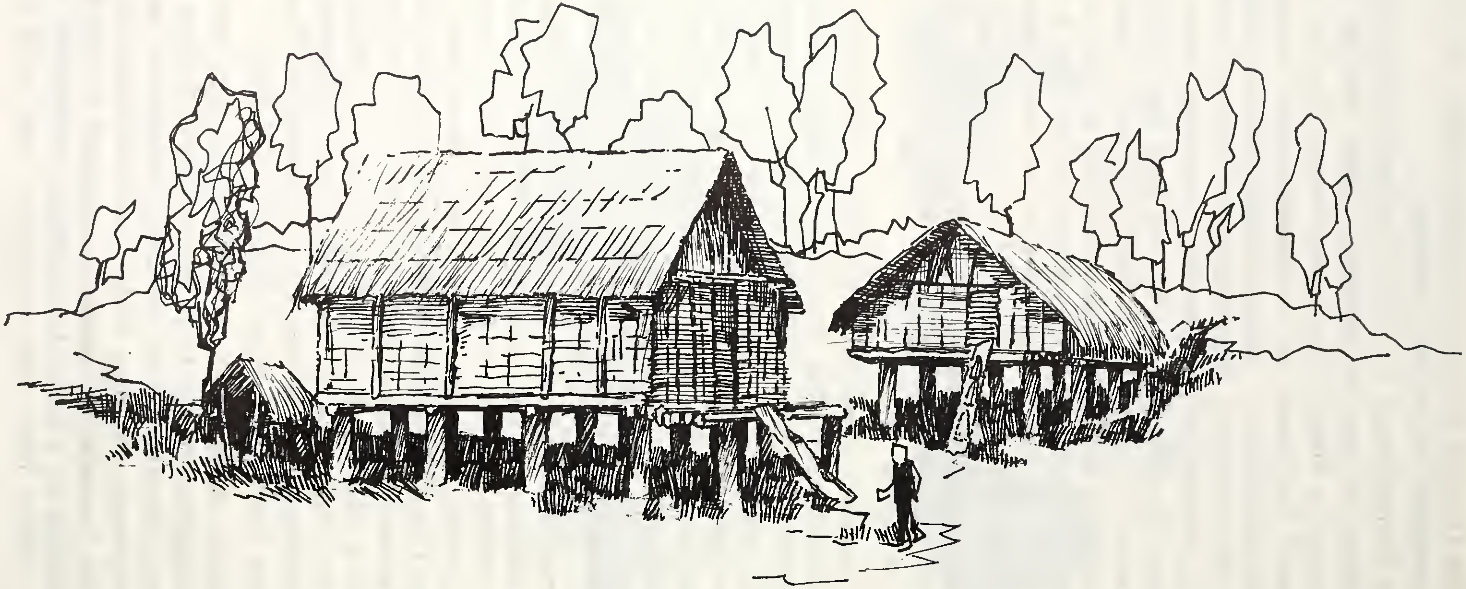


Figure 31. M'nong Preh houses.

houses near springs, waterfalls, and large forests, which they believe to be inhabited by spirits.

In the center of the mir, the Nong also build a guard hut, which is occupied night and day while the mir is being cultivated. The hut, of woven rattan, is constructed about 12 to 18 feet above the ground on bamboo poles. The height permits the hut to serve as a watchtower to alert the village to approaching danger, as well as to guard the mir against birds, boars, deer, elephants, and other animals. The guard hut also has several auxiliary purposes. It is used to store tools used in the mir and supplies for the defense of the village. The hut also serves as a temporary location for the village while a new village is being constructed. The mir, with the supplies stored in the guard hut, provides a reserve village in case of emergency.[22]

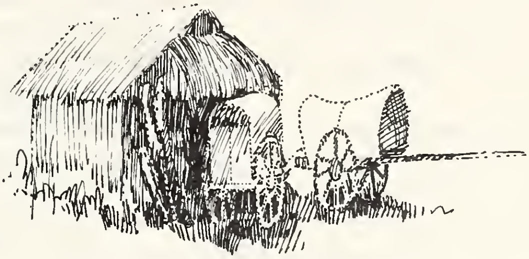


Figure 32. M'nong hut.

In addition to guard huts on the mirs, the Nong also build little huts at other locations for use as temporary shelters while hunting and fishing; these huts are quite simple in construction.[23]

Traditionally, Nong villages were surrounded by high barricades of logs 7 or 8 feet high. A Nong village was often surrounded by three or four rings of barricades, one inside the other. The entrance to the fortified village was a narrow footpath which passed through a series of gates in the barricades. Some gates were heavy bamboo screens, while others were sharpened bamboo poles lashed together. The fortified villages also had underground exists by which the inhabitants could escape when necessary. After the French pacification of the tribes, a low fence became common. However, as a result of Viet Cong operations, the earlier fortification barricades may again be seen in the Nong area.[24]

The M'nong clear paths through the forest undergrowth with machetes for travel to their fields, water source, and other villages. During the rainy season, it is necessary to maintain these paths, or the dense growth of vegetation, stimulated by the rain, greatly limits the mobility of the tribespeople.

The M'nong also construct simple bridges across chasms and streams. Some bridges are built by merely felling a large tree across a stream or ravine and adding siderails of bamboo. The M'nong have also built suspension bridges of woven rattan.[25]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

There is little accurate scientific data on the physical measurements of the M'nong. In 1941, however, 16 young Rlam military recruits from the Daak Lak area were measured. The average height of these young men was approximately 5 feet 8 inches, with the shortest 5 feet 1 inch. The average weight of the men in this group was 110 pounds; the lowest weight was 101 pounds and the heaviest, 143 pounds.[1]

In this group of Rlam tribesmen, the skin color on the parts of the body exposed to the sun could be termed brown with a red and yellow cast. The parts of the body not exposed to the sun were lighter, almost yellowish. The hair, black and wavy, was curlier than that of the Rhade,[2] and there was little body hair.

The eyes of the Rlam were generally dark brown, although there were some individuals with light brown eyes. The Mongolian or epicanthic fold on the eyelid is rarely seen among the M'nong.[3]

Health

The health of the M'nong who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene are rudimentary.

The tribespeople bathe in streams; the women usually bathe in one part of a stream and the men in another.[4] The soap with which the tribespeople wash themselves is a white substance prepared from the berries of the mpat tree. During the rainy season, when the forests are filled with leeches, the soap is used to wash leeches from the body. The M'nong also sprinkle tobacco juice on the leeches to remove them.[5]

Women shampoo each other's hair by using water in which rice has been washed; locally, this is called a "M'nong shampoo." [6]

Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and sexual contact.[7]

The following information on disease generally applies to most tribal areas. Every member of the tribe has probably had malaria at least once during his lifetime. The two common types of malaria found in the tribal areas are benign tertian malaria, which causes high fever with relapses over a period of time, but is usually not fatal; and malignant tertian malaria, which is fatal to both infants and adults.[8]

Plague, carried by the rat louse, has appeared in many tribal areas and may appear from time to time in the M'nong area.

The three types of typhus in this region are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Typhus is reported to be especially frequent among the tribes.[9]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and smallpox are common in the tribal areas. Dysentery and yaws are significant causes of infant mortality.[10] Parasitic infections and various fungus diseases are also prevalent.[11]

The M'nong believe that disease is caused by evil spirits stealing the soul of the sick person. They wear amulets to protect themselves from diseases, and they resort to religious practitioners for cures. Amulets, hung around the neck for protection against disease, include silver money, metal cylinders, various articles in small bags, and leaves of the gun plant, believed to have magical powers to ward off disease.[12]

Religious healers perform various rituals to cure their patients. One healing ceremony is called *mho'tok mong,* "to extract the splints." In this ritual the healer pretends to suck small splinters, believed to represent the arrows of evil spirits and to be the source of the pain, from the afflicted area.[13]

To treat an attack of malaria, a religious healer rotates a wicker pouch containing quartz stones eight times over the patient's head. Then he rotates a bowl, upside down, containing embers upon which there is a magical substance called "Resin of the Sky" *(cae troo)* over the patient. Finally, the healer applies a pinch of this resin to various parts of the patient's body—chest, back, elbows, soles of the feet. Each step of the healing ritual is accompanied by recitations of magic formulas.

If a healing rite fails to cure, the family of the sick person will send for a more professional healer, who will chew up some saffron and put it on the patient's forehead, throat, temples, on the top of his skull, and on his back. Then this healer will press his lips on the patient's forehead and inhale to break the noose with which the *caak* (demon) is strangling the patient. The healer spits into his hand what he has drawn off the patient's head; then, ordering everyone to get out of the way, he throws this thing into the fire.

Another healer may massage the patient to remove body dirt in a treatment called *proproh uuk* or *proproh kiek.* The M'nong believe the mud came from the caak and is the cause of the illness. This treatment may continue for a long time.[14]

Physical Characteristics Which Might Affect the Use of Weapons

The small physical size of the M'nong limits the size of weapons they can conveniently carry and use. If they were involved in mobile operations, the M'nong are best qualified to handle lightweight, highly portable arms. On the other hand, in fixed emplacements, the M'nong could handle heavier equipment.

Psychological Characteristics

The behavior of the M'nong is often unpredictable: at times, they are overactive, excitable, and aggressive; at other times, they are calm and almost indolent.[15] This variation may stem from their agricultural routine, which requires great bursts of energy at certain times of the year and at other times involves a minimum of effort.

The M'nong are group oriented and seldom approach tasks and problems as individuals. Their behavior is strongly influenced by the conformity required by their traditions and customs. However, there are individuals who strive to gain prestige and status by acquiring wealth and political power. Among the M'nong, this status is symbolized by the Tam Boh, an exchange of sacrifices between parents and a married son.* The most respected man among the M'nong is the one who can afford to sacrifice the greatest number of buffaloes—this man wins the admiration of all the people. If a man is skilled in reciting the legends of the tribe and its spirits, he also is greatly respected.[16]

The M'nong are generally considered to be less intelligent than the Rhade and Jarai.[17] They have been called mediocre in their ability to follow instructions.[18]

Emotional Characteristics

In a situation of great stress, the M'nong will quickly disappear into the forest. This happened recently when a M'nong group was moved from its lands and village into a new village constructed by the Vietnamese Government. Being away from their lands and spirits greatly distressed the M'nong; at the first opportunity, they all moved out of the new village, disappearing into the forest to prearranged traditional hiding places.[19]

---

* See "Religion," p. 504.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The important social units among the M'nong are the family and the village. Several families may live together in separate sections of the same house by virtue of kinship or friendship. The M'nong are a matrilineal society, tracing their descent through the female line; the family name is that of the wife, and children are considered members of the mother's family. A family tracing descent and relationship through the maternal line forms a clan. Clan members are not allowed to marry or have sexual relations with each other,[1] and those of the same generation call each other "brother" and "sister."

Among the M'nong, family structure rests principally on the *mpool* or clan. The mpool is the total number of individuals who claim descent from a common ancestor on the mother's side. The clan name and belongings are transmitted from mother to children. Members of the same clan are considered, in effect, brothers and sisters, if they belong to the same generation; and as fathers and mothers and children, or as uncles-aunts and nephews-nieces, if they belong to two successive generations; and as grandparents and grandchildren, if they are of two generations separated by a third.[2]

There is some class division among the M'nong: There are the rich tribesmen, the ordinary tribesmen, and persons with skills, such as the power to heal. Position among the rich is secured through sacrifices, the most important of which is Tam Boh,* offered by the members of a family. The more numerous these sacrifices, the greater is the prestige. A rich family may also show its wealth by ownership of fine and expensive jars and gongs; but the buffalo sacrifices are of greater importance. Ordinary tribesmen with the necessary means to make buffalo sacrifices can move into a higher social class.

With the exception of hunting and fishing, in which both men and women participate, labor is divided among the sexes: The men hunt, engage in warfare, clear the fields, prepare the ground for sowing, make baskets, and work with metal; the women spin, weave, plant seeds, and gather edible leaves, fruits, and roots in the forest.[3]

---

* See "Religion," p. 504.

Marriage

Initiative for a marriage is in the hands of the girl. However, the M'nong belief that incest is offensive to the spirits and a danger to the fertility of the land prevents her marrying anyone who is a member of her mother's family or clan, no matter how distant the relationship.[4]

The marriage ceremony itself is based on two traditions: *tam book,* or "bumping of heads," and *rbii baa,* or "caressing the paddy." In the former and more important rite, the person who handled the marriage arrangements places himself between the bride and the groom, takes hold of some hair of each and knots it together, unties the knot, and utters a prayer. Then, while counting to eight, he knocks the heads of the couple together.[5] Rbii baa is a custom in which the bride's father leads his son-in-law to the granary where rice for the young couple has been stored for the first time.

Gifts from the bridegroom to the bride at the wedding may include such items as a small neckless jar (*yang dam*), a basket of bamboo tubes *(ding paa)* filled with bamboo shoot preserves and corked with buffalo skin, a tin comb, a glass-bead necklace, a brass and tin bracelet, a small bottle, or a hen. The couple may also receive joint gifts, such as a hog or rice wine.[6]

Following the marriage ceremony, the newlyweds, now clearly identified by hairdresses made of pearls arranged in bands, move into the house of the bride's mother; however, if the girl's family is poor, the newlyweds may move in with the young husband's family temporarily.[7]

A second marriage is sometimes contracted—usually only among rich tribesmen. When a wife dies, the husband has the right to demand that his dead wife's family supply him with a replacement, ordinarily a younger sister of his deceased wife. A wife surviving her husband may similarly ask her husband's family to provide her with a spouse, generally a younger brother of the husband.[8]

Birth, Child-Rearing Practices, and Education

The M'nong refer to childbirth as "remaining near the fire." Before delivery, the woman lies on a mat near the hearth close to the granary, while the husband—joined in many cases by the wife's sister—gathers ashes and charcoal from the hearth and utters incantations, in which spectators may join. After the wife has given birth—in a kneeling position grasping a rope strung above her head—the afterbirth is buried in the ground outside the house and is covered by a stone to prevent the demons from devouring it, thereby causing the newborn child to die.[9]

Seven days after the child is born, a ceremony called "bringing out the child" *(njur koon)* occurs: the mother carries her baby for the first time, wrapped in a blanket on her back.[10]

The M'nong allow their children complete freedom, treating them with a great deal of affection when they are very young. From the age of 12, however, boys are not permitted to joke in the presence of their parents, grandparents, or sisters. In the past, at puberty the upper front teeth of boys and girls were filed down and stained black, while the lower front teeth were filed to sharp points.[11] The puberty rite is apparently disappearing among the M'nong.

The legendary history and myths of the tribe are taught to the children at home or at special social events. Children also learn skills necessary for daily life from their parents.

The M'nong resist formal education; only a few have been educated in schools operated by the Government or by missionaries. In the missionary schools, the children learn to read and write in their own language; in the Government schools, instruction is wholly in the Vietnamese language. However, few M'nong can read and write either language.[12]

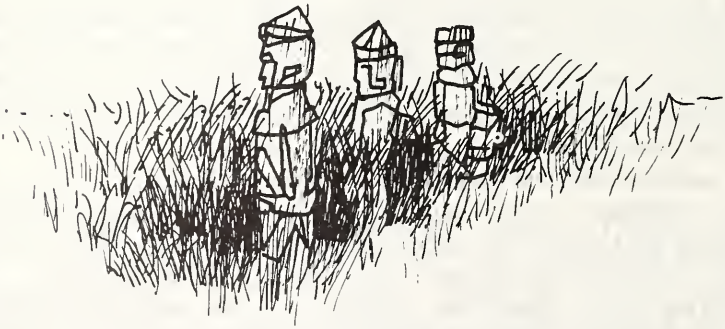


Figure 33. M'nong tomb statues.

Death and Burial

When a M'nong dies, the body is placed upon a low platform in his house, and the feet are bound together at the ankles and the big toes with two solid bands of cotton thread. The body is then wrapped in a blanket. Offerings are placed alongside the body, and some coins may be placed on the chest. Members of the family of both sexes surround the body, weep, and utter lamentations. People of the village come with offerings and join in the lamenta-

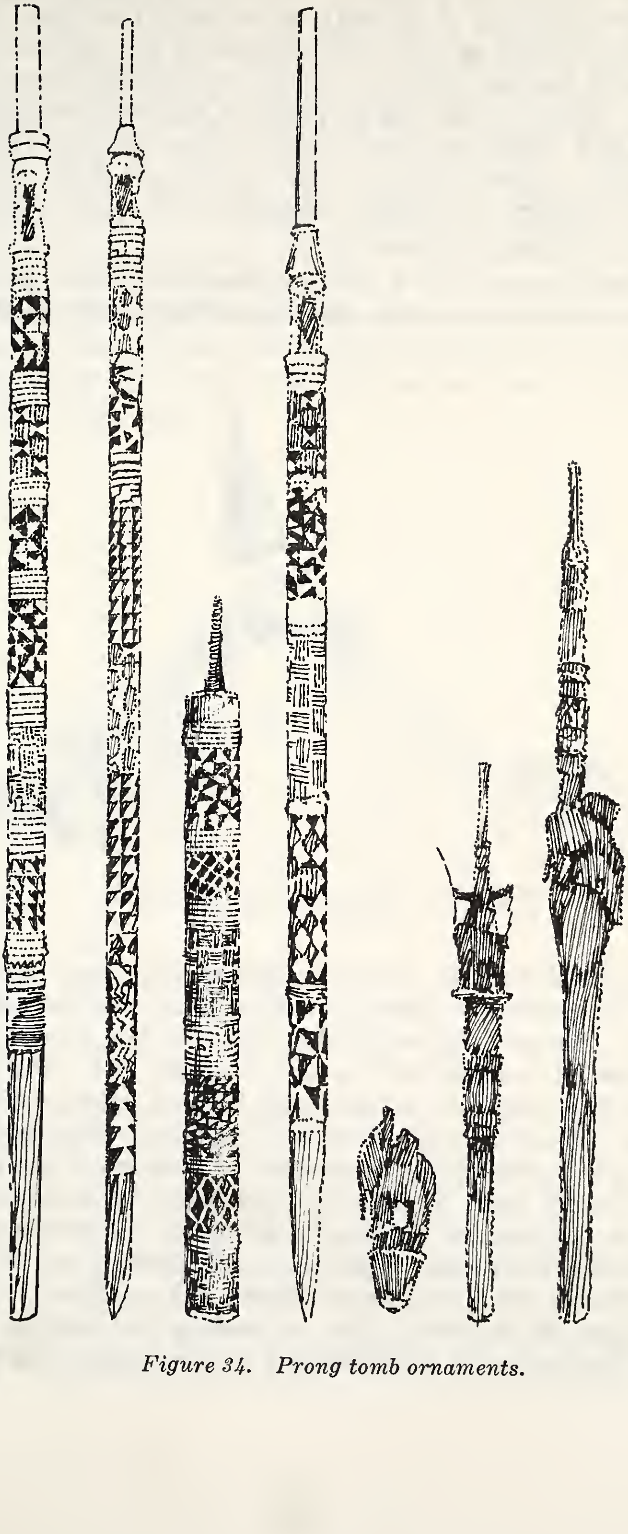


Figure 34. Prong tomb ornaments.

tions for the deceased. Conversation deals with the dead person, his malady, and other cases of a similar nature. Women take turns weeping during the entire night. A chicken is sacrificed, its blood is spread on the chest of the body, and a jar of rice wine is opened and drunk by those present. The hearth of the deceased is destroyed, and a dummy kitchen is set up near the body for use in the afterlife. The pipe and tobacco pouch of the deceased are placed near his head. Sticks are placed upright at the head and feet of the corpse, and a string made of bits of red and white cotton is stretched between the bamboo uprights. At first light of day, the corpse is covered with a shroud.

In the morning a group of villagers goes to the forest and selects a tree to be made into a coffin. After a sacrifice to the spirit of the tree, it is cut down, cut to length, split, and hollowed out to form a coffin. The body is wrapped in matting and put in the coffin with offerings. The cover is put on the coffin, and the crack along the edge of the lid is sealed with a glue of sticky rice. The coffin is tied with three rattan cords, and on the lid are placed the deceased's belt, pipe, tobacco pouch, and knife. All who participated in the making of the coffin purify themselves by washing in the river.

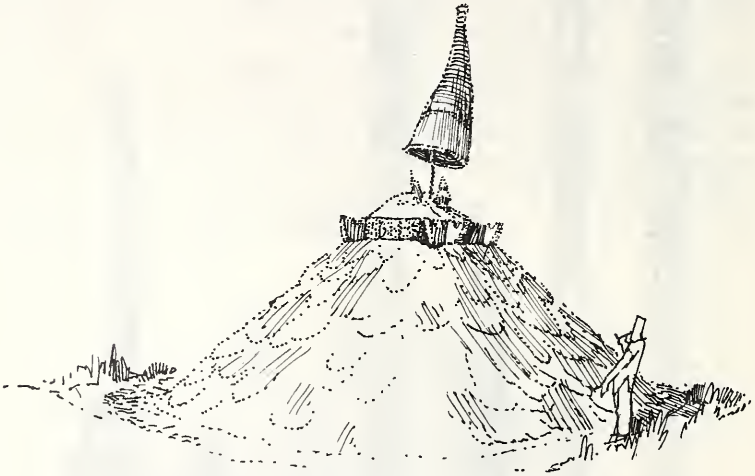


Figure 35. M'nong Rlam burial mound.

That evening, upon the return of the men who made the coffin, the *njat*, a sacrifice and libation, is offered to the deceased. Jars of rice wine are arranged in a line in the entrance hall of the deceased's house, and a number of animals are sacrificed. Villagers and members of the family join in weeping and offering funeral chants. The mourning on this second evening takes place over the coffin, not the body as during the previous night. Then rice wine is drunk by those present.

The next morning the coffin is carried outside the house and opened; then the face of the deceased is uncovered for a final viewing. Some charcoal is placed in the coffin next to the corpse. The face of the corpse is covered with a white cloth, and the lid of the coffin is again sealed and bound with rattan cords fastened in geometric designs. The coffin is then attached to a pole for the trip to the graveyard, where the men dig the grave with its long axis lying east-west. The coffin is placed in the grave, and the hoe and machete of the deceased are put in the grave next to the coffin. The grave is filled and mounded; jars are put on top of the mound; and a string attached to the coffin comes out of the mound. A fence is built around the grave, and a roof is placed over the mound. All who attended the funeral then go to the river to purify themselves and return home.[13]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all M'nong activities are regulated by customs and taboos. There are prescribed methods and procedures governing everything from dress to construction of houses to the settlement of disputes and individual behavior. Having had no written language, the M'nong have transmitted these prescriptions by word of mouth from generation to generation, and they have gradually attained the strength of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the M'nong are constantly on guard to avoid actions, activities, and contact with objects or animals that they believe might be displeasing to the spirits. Customs and taboos vary from subgroup to subgroup, village to village, and family to family.

Dress

Among the M'nong, clothing is personal and is never sold or given away. The Gar men wear a loincloth called the *suu troany.* A long piece of cloth, decorated in front, the loincloth is passed between the thighs and around the loins, leaving the legs and buttocks bare. The suu troany is usually the only article of clothing worn during the day. Occasionally, a short sleeveless tunic, sometimes made of bark, is worn with the loincloth. In the evening, a blanket is added to the costume. M'nong women wear rectangular skirts, the flaps of which are secured by belts in front. They either leave their chests bare or wear tunics with long sleeves. Children generally wear no clothes at all until they are 6 years old; their heads are completely shaved except for a small lock of hair left on the top.

Currently, readymade clothes are being worn more and more by the M'nong. Women like to buy cotton bodices and skirts; and the men like jackets, shirts, topcoats, and overcoats. M'nong men show little interest in shorts or trousers.

Both men and women once wore their hair in knots, but younger men now cut their hair short. Normally the head is left bare. However, for festive occasions men may wear white turbans woven by their wives; rich men wear black satin imported turbans. The M'nong also like to wear imported berets, usually inside out to exhibit the manufacturer's label. When M'nong men go to war, they wear peacock or white hen feathers in their hair.

Both men and women wear bracelets and necklaces. Women wear strings of pearls in their hair, and men wear wooden, tin-coated combs. Men and women have pierced earlobes; through these the men place ivory plugs, and the women, wooden discs. As the pierced part of the earlobe tends to stretch, the discs are gradually replaced by larger and larger ones; consequently, older women often have earlobes which reach almost to their shoulders.[1]

Tribal Folklore

M'nong folklore contains many legends about their history, heroes, and even about animals. The tiger, for example, is believed to have special powers, and its activities are recounted in great detail. Legends and stories are told in the evening, when the day's work is done.[2]

Other legends tell of the history of M'nong sacrifices. One poem tells how man first tried to perform sacrifices, but was unsuccessful because he tried to sacrifice plants instead of animals. Man learned to make effective sacrifices, say the M'nong, from two legendary heroes, Mot Dlong and Mot Dlaang, during the time of the great flood. When it seemed as if the rain would never stop, Mot Dlong and Mot Dlaang sacrificed a dog, a crocodile, and an iguana to stop the rain; however, these sacrifices were ineffective and the rain continued to pour down. Mot Dlong and Mot Dlaang sat in the rain and pondered, wondering what had gone wrong. Then they had an inspiration: they decided to sacrifice buffaloes. They captured some buffaloes and had their servants prepare the animals for the sacrifice. A great sacrifice was held, and Mot Dlong and Mot Dlaang prayed for the rains to stop. The sacrifice was successful, and the rain stopped; since that time, buffaloes have been the preferred sacrificial animals among the M'nong.[3]

Folk Beliefs

Believing that trees, rocks, and animals—in fact, all their surroundings—are inhabited by spirits, the M'nong are always on guard against evil spirits; they avoid committing offenses which might anger them. The M'nong believe that spirits make their wishes known through dreams and omens. For example, during the selection of a house site, it is considered a good omen if the owner of the new house dreams about fruit, rice, a paddy, a tomb, hunting, or swimming. If the dream is about buffaloes, killing deer, or the breaking of teeth, it is considered a bad omen.[4] Seeing flames devour the loincloth of a person in a dream predicts that person's death.[5]

Because of their fear of spirits and demons, the M'nong will not build their houses near certain waterfalls, forests, and plateaus.[6]

A violation of the taboo of sexual relations between members of the same family through the maternal line can precipitate disaster: the crops may fail or torrential rains may fall.[7]

Some actions are believed to precipitate an attack by tigers; for example, if rice is scraped from a pot with a knife, tigers are sure to come.[8]

Eating Customs

Although rice is the basis of their diet, the M'nong also eat corn, bananas, beans, eggplant, manioc, taro, yams, sugarcane, cucumbers, oranges, mangoes, limes, papayas, red chili peppers, ginger and mushrooms. After ceremonies involving sacrifices, the M'nong eat the meat of the sacrified animals; they also eat wild animals, fish, and plants collected from the forests.[9]

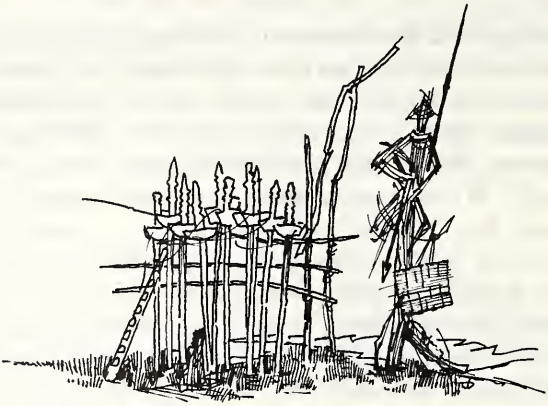


Figure 36. M'nong Gar taboo signs.

Many M'nong groups have dietary prohibitions, some permanent, some temporary; for example, one M'nong group may not be allowed to eat deer, while other groups are allowed to do so. Some dietary prohibitions are enforced only in connection with certain religious ceremonies.[10] However, sacrifices are always times of great celebration, with much eating and drinking of rice wine.

There are also restrictions for eating certain foods at special times. After the filing down of his teeth, for example, a person is prohibited from eating chicken or the vegetable *khoi* for 8 days.[11]

When relaxing, M'nong men smoke their pipes. When they do not have their pipes in their mouths, the M'nong put them in their hair knots. The tribesmen also chew a bamboo rod, the ragged end of which they insert into the bowl of their pipes to absorb the tobacco juice; usually, one of these bamboo rods is also stuck in their hair.[12]

Drinking Customs

Water is stored between the joints in sections of bamboo or in pitchers made of dried gourds.[13]

Rice wine is a special beverage usually drunk at religious ceremonies and when receiving visitors from outside the village. Rice wine is prepared in a jar by fermenting rice flour *(ndrii)* to which bran has been added. The ferment, prepared by the women, is made of roots and rice flour [14] and looks like small porous white cones.

Rice wine is prepared in and drunk from jars *(yang)* which may be grouped into four classes: first, small common jars for ordinary family circumstances; then, the new, large, ornamented jars, used by ordinary families for religious ceremonies; the third group consists of old, rare jars used by rich families for religious ceremonies; and the fourth class consists of jars of very exceptional value which are treated almost like people. The owners recite the history and heritage of these valuable jars which are believed to be inhabited by good spirits. Ownership of the valuable jars enhances a family's position considerably.[15]

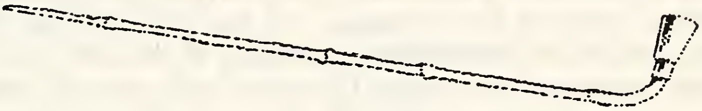


Figure 37. M'nong Gar pipe.

After the rice wine has been fermented, a jar is opened and some of the rice wine is poured into a bowl for anointing and drinking during prayers. Then, when the drinking is about to begin, the jar is filled to the top with water. Rice wine is drunk through a long drinking straw or hollow reed inserted in the top of the jar;[16] the jar must never be touched with the lips, since various spirits live in the wine jars.[17] Also, one must not shake his head when drinking.

Customs Relating to Animals

The M'nong raise pigs, dogs, ducks, cats, goats, horses, elephants and buffaloes.[18] Buffaloes are raised for sacrifices; buffalo sacrifices are believed to be the most effective means of propitiating the spirits. Members of the Rlam subgroup in the lowland marshy area raise buffaloes to sell to other M'nong groups for sacrifice.[19] It is a ceremonious occasion when the people go out of their village to buy a sacrificial buffalo from another community.[20]

To the M'nong, the tiger has a supernatural significance and is associated with the spirits. The M'nong do not like to hunt tigers, which some believe can become invisible. [21]

Some taboos and practices are associated with animals and animal refuse. For example, if a dog steps over a newly born infant, the dog must be sacrificed at once, then cooked and eaten by the people who attended the delivery of the child.[22] A swallow caught outside the house may be eaten; if a swallow is caught inside a house, eating it is taboo. The tribesmen examine the birds for evil signs; and if any evil signs are found, the house is purified with a sacrifice of a dog and a jar of alcohol. There is also a taboo on touching animal dung; the M'nong believe lightning will strike a person who does—the exception is touching animal dung used as fertilizer for the fields.[23]

Customs Relating to Warfare

The M'nong have traditionally been warriors; until recently, intervillage warfare was common. In the past, M'nong villages were encircled by fortifications consisting of three or four strong wooden barricades, one inside the other, with specially contrived gates through the barricades. To permit exit from the village, tunnels were built to bypass the barricades.

Traditional weapons of the M'nong included crossbows, lances, sabers, and knives. The M'nong customarily wore all his clothing into battle as a shield for bodily protection.

Certain events signify war or preparation for war. For example, an apparent lack of rice in a village near the end of the harvest (when it should be plentiful) might mean that rice is being stored in the mir hut or in huts in the forest as part of a general preparation for war.[24] Also, if the most precious jars of a house suddenly disappear from their usual places, this may indicate that preparations for fighting are underway in that particular tribal group, for it is customary to hide valuable jars in the forest before beginning hostilities.[25]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

Although visitors to a M'nong village are politely and hospitably received, the tribesmen are suspicious of strangers and will be on the alert to determine the outsiders' motives. They also watch for signs indicating that the presence of the strangers offends the spirits. Generally, outsiders are not permitted inside a M'nong village when a taboo is in effect; usually a cord will be stretched across the village gate, or some sort of barrier will be erected, to prohibit entrance. If the village expects a visitor, the tribesmen will go out to warn the outsider that the restriction is in effect.[26]

Although an isolated stranger might be in danger among the M'nong if he breaks one of their taboos, an outsider recognized by the tribesmen as a member of a powerful group, such as the Vietnamese or American military, would not be subject to reprisal for an inadvertent violation of M'nong customs. Repeated violations of tribal customs by an individual outsider, however, may cause the tribespeople to generalize about the mistakes, and they may become increasingly suspicious of all visitors from that outside group.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The M'nong have an animistic religion; they believe that spirits inhabit all parts of their world—the trees, the streams, the animals, and the land. In addition, spirits are associated with mythical birds and mythical heroes. The M'nong live in constant interaction with these spirits; life is a constant struggle to thwart the evil spirits. Illness, crop failures, and many other misfortunes are attributed to the evil spirits.[1] The M'nong believe that their ancestors have an existence after death, and they, too, watch over human beings and help them in their relationships with the spirits.[2]

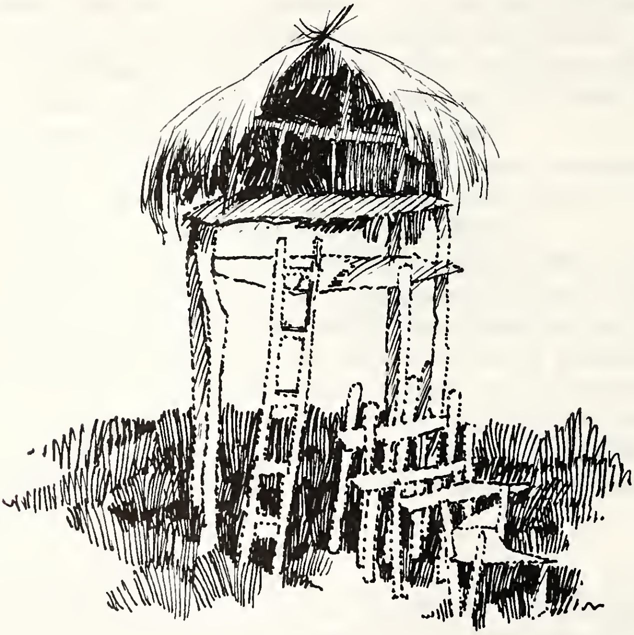


Figure 38. M'nong altar to the spirit Nduu.

Principal Deities and Spirits

The most important spirit in the M'nong religion is Nduu, who represents the soul of the rice (fertility) and is also the mythical or legendary hero who started the human race.* [3] This spirit is called Tum Nduu by the Gar and Prah ba by other M'nong groups.[4]

Next in importance are the spirits of the elements: earth, fire, water, and sky. The spirit of the earth or land, Nglar Nguec, plays an important role in the selection of sites for fields and houses. The name Nglar Nguec means, literally, "Bird of the Rock Crystal." [5] There are several sky spirits of the rain, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and there are also subsidiary land spirits—for example, spirits of topographical features and streams. Moreover, there are spirits connected with the village and its houses—for example, spirits of the village gate, of the columns of the house, and of the hearth.[6]

In addition to the various spirits, the M'nong also have demons believed to be responsible for illness.† These demons, called caak, are believed to steal the souls of the tribesmen, thereby causing illness.[7]

Principal Religious Ceremonies

Prominent among the religious ceremonies performed by the M'nong are the rituals for the purification of a field when incest is suspected, for healing the sick, for preserving or improving the crops, for the burial of the dead, and for cementing alliances between parents and children or between tribal groups.[8]

The ceremony of greatest importance is the Tam Boh, the exchange of sacrifices between parents and a married son. The parents offer a sacrifice *boh sur sreh puh,* to publicly show their satisfaction with a son and to add to the prestige of both themselves and the son. Once the parents have offered a boh sur sreh puh, the son is bound to reciprocate the honor, even if this is done many years later. The Tam Boh can take place between unrelated people; in this case it is called *tam boh jook kuang,* and it forms an alliance between them.

The Tam Boh ceremony is the most important ceremony for all M'nong men—through this ceremony a man gains power, prestige, and, eventually, a political role in the village. The Tam Boh is repeated as often as possible, for the number of these ceremonies performed determines a man's status.

Some of the agricultural feasts are celebrated as follows: [9]

---

* See "Legendary History," p. 480.

† See "Health," p. 489.

Agricultural Ceremonies and Feasts

Feast	*Time of Year*
Feast of the Blood Unction of the Paddy (A harvest feast)	Late November
Feast of the Posts (To retain the soul of the rice in the field and thereby insure a good harvest)	Late September
Feast of the Pincers (To give strength to the growing rice)	Summer
Feast of the Planting of the Rice Field	April/May
Feast of the Soil (To generally strengthen the fertility of the land)	Time of year varies; apparently held every few years

Missionary Contact

The Gar in Sar Luk were first exposed to missionary activity in the 1940's, when they were visited by three Rhade evangelists, sent by the pastor of Ban Me Thuot. Speaking in the Rhade language, an evangelist told his audience about his religion: "You are still obeying the evil spirits who are voracious and exact sacrifices. I have come today to tell you of a good god who asks no sacrifices. He is of concern to all of us—French, English, Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cham; all believe in him. He has created the world and all the beings in it." As the evangelist gave a summary of sacred history from Genesis through the New Testament, one of the Gar translated it, adding splendid embellishments; the story of the creation of the world, the flood, a man swallowed and spat out by a monster, the sea engulfing an entire army, and a Son of the Spirit offering a feast to a whole crowd with only a few cakes.[10] Since then, missionaries from the Christian and Missionary Alliance have been active in the M'nong area.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The M'nong economy is based on slash-and-burn agriculture. The slash-and-burn technique used by the M'nong involves the cutting and burning of trees and underbrush in a chosen area, called the mir. The mir is cleared during the winter dry season, usually in February or March. The ashes are left in the mir to fertilize the soil. The mir is then planted before the spring rains begin. As M'nong lands are poor, mirs must be cleared each year. After each harvest the mirs are allowed to become reforested for 20 years. The cultivation of the mirs on a 20-year cycle is practiced by all the M'nong except the Rlam, who live in a marshy lowland area, grow wet or irrigated rice, and maintain permanent fields.

In order to stay near the mirs, the M'nong, except for the Rlam, move their villages periodically; this results in a slow migration within the tribal area. The M'nong call this movement "eating the forest." [1]

Although rice is the primary crop of the M'nong, the tribesmen also grow vegetables (corn, beans, eggplant, manioc, yams, cucumbers, chili peppers), fruits (bananas, oranges, limes, mangoes and papayas), and sugarcane. Some tobacco and cotton are also grown in the M'nong area.[2]

Special Arts and Skills

The M'nong, chiefly farmers, are also adept at hunting, fishing, and basketmaking. Various M'nong groups engage in ironwork and pottery making.[3] In the lake area, four villages have potters who furnish pots for the region, as well as for trade with the Rhade. The Gar and Rlam are adept at ironwork, though the Rlam have fewer forges than the Gar.

Each M'nong can repair his own tools, and every village has two or three men famous for their skill at forging sabers, machetes, lances, and hoes from bars of imported iron. Other members of the community buy these implements from them.[4]

Tribal Monetary/Exchange System

Commerce among the M'nong involves a complex system of exchange. Each item of merchandise is priced and sold according to numerous criteria of value: an item is valued in jars, pigs, skirts, and, for the most expensive goods, buffaloes. In addition, the Vietnamese piaster is in general circulation.

Trade

Market centers near the M'nong are found in Da Lat and Ban Me Thuot. In these towns, the M'nong purchase salt, imported dry goods, new jars, and other items from Vietnamese and Chinese merchants.[5]

Trade between the M'nong subgroups and with neighboring tribes takes place on a local or village level.[6] The M'nong Rlam are completely dependent upon neighboring groups of woven material; their women do not know how to weave, and both men and women engage in trade with the Gar and Rhade for their clothing requirements. The Rlam barter with their neighbors for clothing, all kinds of rattan cane, and tools; in exchange, they trade buffaloes, rice, drinking straws, and pottery (especially with the Rhade).[7]

Property System

The tribal lands are under supervision of three or four influential men of the village, "the Sacred Men of the Forest and the Village," who are responsible for the land and its use. They determine where the mirs will be located and where the villages are to be built. Except for property acquired jointly by a husband and wife through marriage, all other property is generally controlled by the women of the tribe.

If a spouse dies, the property he or she brought into the home is returned to the family from which it originally came. Goods acquired after marriage are divided between the children and the family of the wife on the one hand and the sisters and mother of the husband on the other.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The village is the highest unit of political organization attained by the M'nong. Leadership is held by a group of elders, called the "Sacred men of the Forest and Village," and a headman, *me-dong*. The elders are selected by the villagers from the wealthier and more influential men in the village. The elders, in turn, select the headman, with due consideration for the opinions of the villagers at large.[1]

The M'nong headman is chosen, above all, for his knowledge of M'nong traditions and his sense of justice; but his personal prestige (for example, his reputation as a great hunter) contributes to his eminence and adds force to his decisions. When the headman dies, the elders, with the consensus of the villagers, designate the man to succeed him. The authority of the headman is particularly important in the area of customs and manners. In political terms, the authority of the headman varies greatly from village to village. Most headmen show themselves to be truly adept judges and conciliators. The authority of some M'nong headmen reportedly extends to neighboring villages, but this probably means influence rather than real political power.[2]

The "Sacred Men of the Forest and Village" exercise the real political and economic power within the M'nong village; they determine such things as the use of a particular plot of land, the user, the moving of the village to another location, and the time to perform various religious rituals. These elders also serve as judges and arbitrators for village-level disputes. The relative position of the headman and the elders may vary considerably from village to village.

The M'nong have also been known to have another type of village leader who becomes important only during periods of intervillage strife.[3] This leader, called the Captain of War, is chosen because of his reputation as a warrior. The Captain of War leads M'nong war expeditions and heads the defense of the M'nong village.

During the period of French occupation, the colonial government trained, instructed, and employed a limited number of the M'nong in administrative posts and in the French Army. The French codified the laws and formalized the political structure of the highland tribes. The French also superimposed a higher political structure upon the tribes and protected the tribesmen and their territory from Vietnamese invasion. The M'nong developed a respect and affection for many of the French; this is reflected in the fact that some of the M'nong can speak French and have adopted French modes of dress and some other French customs.[4]

Legal System

M'nong law is essentially religious law. When a religious law or taboo has been broken, the "Sacred men of the Forest and Village" intervene and require the performance of specific sacrificial ceremonies to satisfy the spirits. For example, when a young couple from the same clan engage in sexual relations, they have committed incest, a grave crime; the "Sacred Men of the Forest and Village" will specify the exact sacrifices to be performed and will determine the fate of the guilty couple.

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[5]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[6] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civic affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[7]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[8] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[9]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court, "all minor offenses," and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[10]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[11]

Subversive Influences

Viet Cong subversive methods range from acts of terrorism to subtle propaganda. Christians, Government officials, and tribesmen who have cooperated with the Government are ostracized, ridiculed, harassed, and occasionally murdered. Viet Cong coercion is particularly evident in their intense enmity toward the few Christian converts among the M'nong.[12] For the Viet Cong, the principles of the Christian ethic are hostile obstacles; missionaries and converts are isolated, persecuted, driven from the villages, or assassinated.

When faced with opposition, the Viet Cong resort to the ruthless elimination of their opponents. Without effective Government protection, the tribespeople find they must cooperate with the Viet Cong to protect themselves, their families, and their villages.

The North Vietnamese have influenced the M'nong to the extent that they reportedly have provided some tribesmen with technical education in North Vietnam. They may also have some influence upon the Viet Cong policies regarding the tribal peoples.[13]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

In general, the principal means of communication among the M'nong is word of mouth; M'nong have few if any radios, and their familiarity with movies or other means of modern communication is slight. Few M'nong can read, making the effectiveness of written communication extremely limited. The M'nong have no storytellers, minstrels, or criers as such. Legends and news are told or discussed by all tribesmen; however, the key communicators and primary opinion formers are the village elders and prominent tribesmen *(kunag)*.[1]

Tribal folklore is part of the M'nong culture and religion, providing not only an evening's relaxation, but also a means of maintaining tribal identity. Among the M'nong, folklore is intimately bound up with religion and ritual.[2]

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account M'nong religious, social, and cultural traditions. All initial contacts should be made only with the tribal elders because of the M'nong political structure. The M'nong should be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Though the M'nong prefer to remain isolated in their traditional way of life, they would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained; as evidenced by their reaction to resettlement schemes, the M'nong resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by foreigners.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the M'nong encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
    e. Insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    a. Provide basic literacy training.
    b. Provide basic citizenship education.
    c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

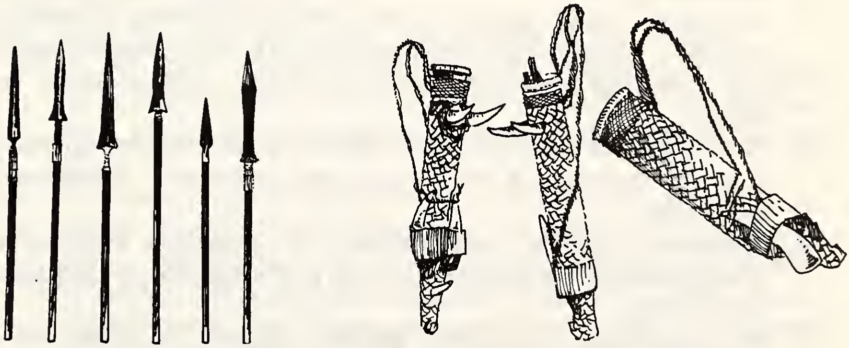
SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

A tradition of both aggressive and defensive warfare points to the likelihood that the M'nong will take up arms readily. Until recently, their raiding activities were common, showing they had no reservations about fighting. The M'nong will fight both aggressively and defensively. The Bu Dong subgroup has been particularly feared in battle; these tribesmen live on the Srepok River near the Cambodian border, and their main occupations have traditionally been hunting and fighting.

The traditional weapons of the M'nong include sabers, knives, lances, and crossbows. The M'nong learn to use these ancient weapons at an early age. Some tribesmen received military training in the use of modern weapons from the French and are now receiving some training from the Vietnamese Government.

The M'nong are accustomed to armed conflict but not for extended periods of time. Traditionally they have engaged in attacks and raids, but these were of short duration.



M'nong Gar spears *M'nong quivers*

Figure 39

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE M'NONG

Every action of the M'nong tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the M'nong may not react as outsiders do. The outsiders should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the M'nong are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a M'nong village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the M'nong. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of M'nong tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. No immediate, important decision should be asked of a M'nong. An opportunity for family consultation should always be provided; if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
7. Tribal elders and the appointed village chief should also receive credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The M'nong should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremoney, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a M'nong house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a M'nong ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a M'nong house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with M'nong women. This could create distrust and dissension.
8. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not touch or otherwise tamper with M'nong tombs.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
3. As soon as possible, identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The M'nong believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.
4. Do not mock M'nong religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of M'nong life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all M'nong property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should

avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.

2. When trading with the M'nong, outsiders should always allow time for family conferences, as the individual M'nong is obliged, by tradition, to consult his family before selling anything.
3. Difficult, rigorous work should be done early in the morning, from dawn to 10:30 or 11:00 a.m. A nap during the middle of the day is customary, and light work is done in the afternoon.
4. Learn simple phrases in the M'nong language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the M'nong.

Health and Welfare

1. The M'nong are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in M'nong areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and should have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Evelyn Mangham, Interview, 1964. [Missionary.]; Bernard Jouin, *La Mort et la tombe: L'Abandon de la tombe* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1949), p. 167; Pierre Huard, and A. Maurice, "Les Mnong du Plateau Central indochinois," *Bulletin et Travaux de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, II (1939), p. 34; Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 154.
2. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
3. Jouin, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
4. Georges Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt de la pierre-génie Gôo (Hii saa brii mau-yaang Gôo): Chronique de Sar Luk, village mnong gar (tribu proto-indochinoise des hauts-plateaux du Viet-Nam central)* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1957), pp. 14–15.
5. Jouin, *op. cit.*, pp. 133, 165–67.
6. LeBar, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
7. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), p. 21.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 67–79.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–88.
11. Mangham, *op. cit.*

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
2. Jouin, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
3. Mangham, *op. cit.*
4. Jouin, *op. cit.*, pp. 165–66.
5. Mangham, *op. cit.*
6. "Man's Arrival," *Jungle Frontiers*, X (Summer 1963), p. 5.
7. Condominas, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
8. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
9. Jouin, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
10. Mangham, *op. cit.*
11. Condominas, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
12. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
13. Mangham, *op. cit.*; Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–47.
14. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62.

18. Georges Condominas, "The Mnong Gar of Central Vietnam," *Social Structure in Southeast Asia,* edited by G. P. Murdock (New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 29, 1960), pp. 17–18.
19. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Georges Condominas, "Notes sur le Tam Bo Mae Baap Kuon (Échange de sacrifices entre un enfant et ses père et mère) Mnong Rlam," *International Archives of Ethnography,* XLVII (1955), p. 129.
22. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–57.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 53–55.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–53.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. A. Maurice, "Rudiments de l'anthropologie des Mnong du Lac (Mnong Rlam)," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), p. 225.
2. Mangham, *op. cit.*
3. Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–26.
4. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 63.
5. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
6. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 51.
7. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–31.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–14.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–18.
11. Norman Lewis, *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), p. 113; Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–24.
12. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
13. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 175.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–40.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–12.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
17. Louis Malleret, *Les Groupes ethniques de l'Indochine française* (Saigon: Publications de la Société des Études Indochinoises, 1937), p. 24.
18. Mangham, *op. cit.*
19. *Ibid.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Mangham, *op. cit.*
2. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 25.
3. Condominas, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 236–37; Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 108; LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
4. Mangham, *op. cit.;* Condominas, "The Mnong Gar," *op. cit.*, p. 181.
5. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé le forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 188–89, 378–79, 381.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
8. Condominas, "The Mnong Gar," *op. cit.*, p. 21.
9. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 238–42.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
11. A. Maurice, "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), pp. 135–39.
12. Mangham, *op. cit.*
13. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 286–329.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 22–23; Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 101, 108, and 126.
2. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
3. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 72–73.
4. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–57.
5. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 120.
6. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
7. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 101.
8. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
9. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
10. Mangham, *op. cit.*
11. Maurice, "À Propos de mutilations dentaires," *op. cit.*, p. 136.
12. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 24–25.
13. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
14. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 26–27; Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
15. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–23.
16. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 26–27.
17. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
18. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
19. Condominas, "Notes sur le Tam Bo Mae Baap Kuon," *op. cit.*, p. 129.
20. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 205.
21. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 244–45.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
24. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
26. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 203–204.

VI. RELIGION

1. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
2. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
3. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 258.
4. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
6. Pierre Huard, "Croyances des M'nongs du Plateau Central indochinois," *Revue des Troupes Coloniales*, XXXI, 242 (1937), p. 867.
7. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, p. 378.
8. Condominas, "Notes sur le Tam Bo Mae Baap Kuon," *op. cit.*, pp. 133–54.
9. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 38, 97, 203–06, 220–55.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 183–85.
11. Mangham, *op. cit.*

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Mangham, *op. cit.*
2. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
3. Condominas, "Notes sur le Tam Bo Mae Baap Kuon," *op. cit.*, pp. 129–30.
4. Condominas, *Nous avons mangé la forêt, op. cit.*, pp. 21–22.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.
6. Mangham, *op. cit.*
7. Condominas, "Notes sur le Tam Bo Mae Baap Kuon," *op. cit.*, pp. 129–30.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Capitaine Doucher de Crèvecoeur, "Les Biats du Haut Chlong," *Revue des Troupes Coloniales*, CCXLIX (1938), p. 324.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Frederic Wickert, "The Tribesmen," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959) pp. 126–31.
5. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
6. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
7. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Mangham, *op. cit.*
13. U.S. Department of State, *Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam* (Department of State Publication No. 7839 (Far Eastern Series 130, February 1965), pp. 1–22.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Huard and Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 135–45.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

No footnotes.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE M'NONG

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bertrand, Gabrielle. *Le Peuple de la jungle.* Paris: Société Commerciale d'Édition et de Libraire-Edition "Je Sers," 1952.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

———. *Les Peuples de la péninsule indochinoise: Histoire-civilisation.* Paris: Dunid, 1962.

Condominas, Georges. "Introduction au Klei Khan Kdam Yi," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extréme-Orient*, XLVII (1955), 555–68.

———. "The Mnong Gar of Central Vietnam," *Social Structure in Southeast Asia.* Edited by G. P. Murdock. New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 29, 1960, 15–23.

———. "Notes sur le Tam Bo Mae Baap Kuon (Échange de sacrifices entre un enfant et ses père et mère) Mnong Rlam," *International Archives of Ethnography*, XLVII (1955), 127–59.

———. *Nous avons mangé la forêt de la pierre-génie Gôo (Hii saa brii mau-yaang Gôo): Chronique de Sar Luk, village mnong gar (tribu proto-indochinoise des hauts-plateaux du Viet-Nam central.* Paris: Mercure de France, 1957.

———. "Rapport d'une mission ethnologique en pays Mnong Gar (pays montagnards du Sud Indochinois)," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 303–13.

de Crèvecoeur, Capitaine Doucher. "Les Biats du Haut Chlong," *Revue des Troupes Coloniales*, CCXLIX (1938), 320–34.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie*, Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Fishel, Wesley R. (ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. "Comments on Y Bham's Address — 15 March 1965." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, March 24, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Huard, Pierre. "Croyances des M'nongs du Plateau Central indochinois," *Revue des Troupes Coloniales*, XXXI, 242 (1937), 866–83.

Huard, Pierre. *Les Mnong.* Hanoi: Travaux de l'Institut Anatomique de l'École Supérieure de Médecine de Hanoi, 1938.

Huard, Pierre, and Maurice, A. "Les Mnong du Plateau Central indochinois," *Bulletins et Travaux de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* II (1939), 27–148.

Jouin, Bernard. *La Mort et la tombe: L'Abandon de la tombe.* Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1949.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al., Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Lewis, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

———. *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois.* Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909.

Malleret, Louis. *Les Groupes ethniques de l'Indochine française.* Saigon: Publications de la Société des Études Indochinoises, 1937.

Malleret, Louis, and Taboulet, Georges. *Album des groupes ethniques de l'Indochine française.* Saigon: Publications de la Société des Études Indochinoises, 1937.

Mangham, Evelyn. Interview. 1964. [Missionary.]

"Man's Arrival," *Jungle Frontiers,* X (Summer 1963).

Maurice, A. "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 135–39.

———. "À Propos d'un motif moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* V (1942), 35–36.

———. "Rudiments de l'anthropologie des Mnong du Lac (Mnong Rlam)," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 225–26.

Ner, Marcel. "Les Moi du Haut-Donnai," *Extrême-Asie* LXXIX (August 1933), 335–50.

Smith, Gordon Hedderly. *The Blood Hunters.* Chicago: World Wide Prayer and Missionary Alliance, 1942.

Smith, Laura Irene. *Farther Into the Night.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954.

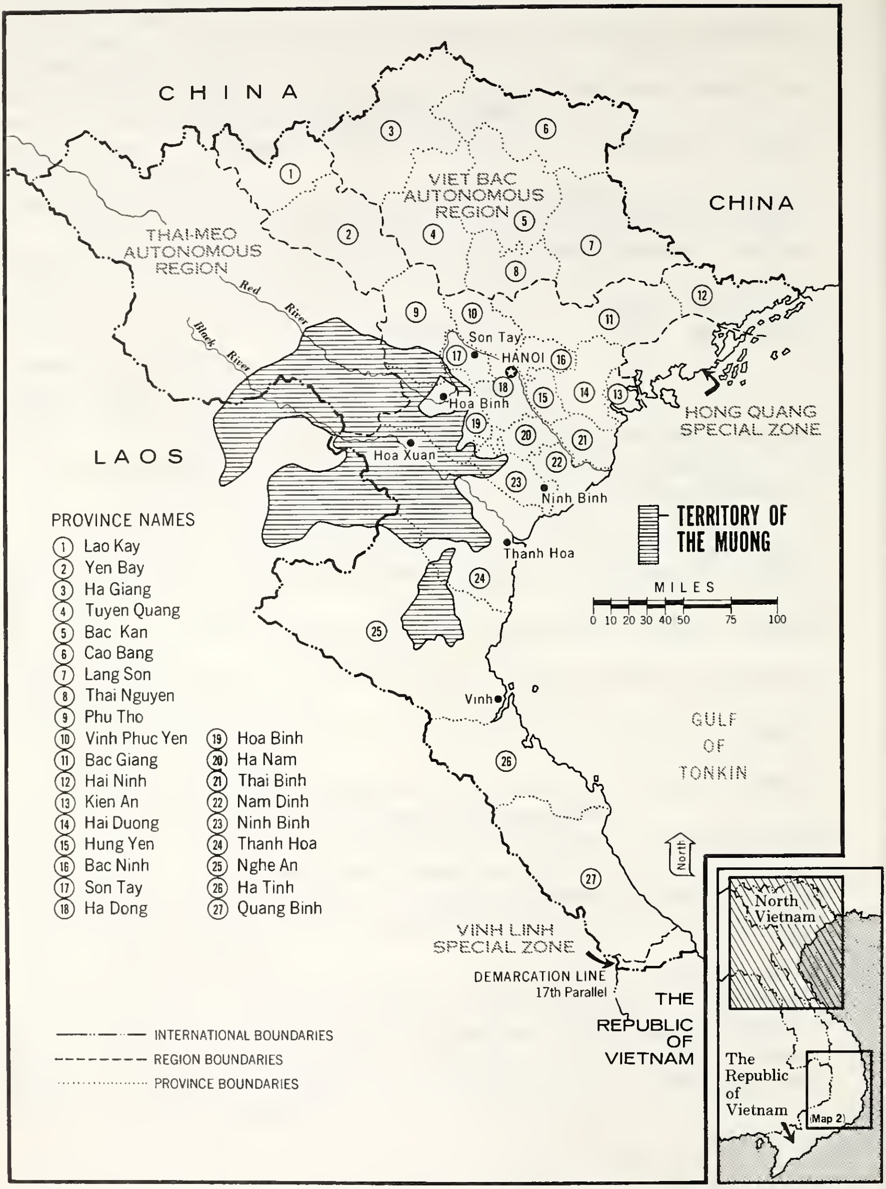
———. *Gongs in the Night: Reaching the Tribes of French Indo-China.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1944.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of State. *Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam.* (Department of State Publication No. 7839), Far Eastern Series 130, February 1965.

Wickert, Frederic. "The Tribesmen," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 126–35.


CHINA
CHINA
LAOS
THAI-MEO AUTONOMOUS REGION
VIET BAC AUTONOMOUS REGION
HONG QUANG SPECIAL ZONE
VINH LINH SPECIAL ZONE
Red River
Black River
Son Tay
HANOI
Hoa Binh
Hoa Xuan
Ninh Binh
Thanh Hoa
Vinh
GULF OF TONKIN
DEMARCATION LINE
17th Parallel
THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
TERRITORY OF THE MUONG
MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50 75 100
North
PROVINCE NAMES
① Lao Kay
② Yen Bay
③ Ha Giang
④ Tuyen Quang
⑤ Bac Kan
⑥ Cao Bang
⑦ Lang Son
⑧ Thai Nguyen
⑨ Phu Tho
⑩ Vinh Phuc Yen
⑪ Bac Giang
⑫ Hai Ninh
⑬ Kien An
⑭ Hai Duong
⑮ Hung Yen
⑯ Bac Ninh
⑰ Son Tay
⑱ Ha Dong
⑲ Hoa Binh
⑳ Ha Nam
㉑ Thai Binh
㉒ Nam Dinh
㉓ Ninh Binh
㉔ Thanh Hoa
㉕ Nghe An
㉖ Ha Tinh
㉗ Quang Binh
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
REGION BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
North Vietnam
The Republic of Vietnam
Map 2

Muong Territories in North Vietnam

CHAPTER 13. THE MUONG

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Muong, one of the largest tribal groups in the Indochinese region, are located primarily in North Vietnam on the southwestern fringe of the Red River Delta. There are, however, a few Muong groups in Laos and some resettled refugee Muong in the Darlac Plateau area of the Republic of Vietnam. Although the tribe numbers between 250,000 and 360,000, only about 10,000 tribesmen live in the Republic of Vietnam.[1]

Despite a few common features, the Muong are distinct from the other Montagnard peoples of the Republic of Vietnam in language, culture, and social structure. While the exact historical relationship between the Muong and the lowland Vietnamese has never been established, the Muong language is more closely related to that of the Vietnamese than to the Mon-Khmer or Malayo-Polynesian languages of the Montagnard tribes.

The patrilineal culture of the Muong, in many ways more sophisticated than that of the other tribes, has been more responsive to outside influences. Their economy is mainly agrarian. They cultivate dry rice and a variety of other crops, raise animals, and engage in numerous crafts. In many ways their religion is similar to that of the lowland Vietnamese, including ancestor worship and belief in village guardian spirits. Their religion also involves, however, many animistic practices similar to those of the Montagnard tribal groups.

Politically, the tribe retains remnants of a hierarchic political structure of hereditary elite families and dependent nonlandowning peasants. Since 1954, many Muong have emigrated from North Vietnam to Laos and the Republic of Vietnam.

Name and Size of Tribe

Because the name Muong has been loosely used and has a variety of current connotations, classification of the Muong is especially difficult. The word Muong derives from the Thai word meaning a territorial division. In the vicinity of Vinh, Muong is used to identify a Thai-speaking group, while a completely different term

—Nha Lang—is used for the tribe referred to in this study as Muong. The Muong themselves use a variety of names, including Mwal, Mwan, Mon, and corruptions of the Vietnamese word *nguoi* (people), such as Nguoe and Ngue. These terms are all synonyms, not names of subgroups. However, other names are used to designate the Muong of specific localities. These areas, with the Muong name used in that area, are:

Area	*Name*
Nghe An	Nha Lang
Quang Binh	Nguon or Sach
Mai Da	Ao-Ta
Fourth Zone	Tho

Location

The largest Muong group inhabits the area south of the Red River in the Province of Ho Binh and comprises the majority of the provincial population.[2] This group also extends into Thanh Hoa, Quang Binh, and Phu Tho Provinces. There are also smaller separate groups located around Quang Binh, Phu Qui, Yen Bay, Son La, and Moc Chau.

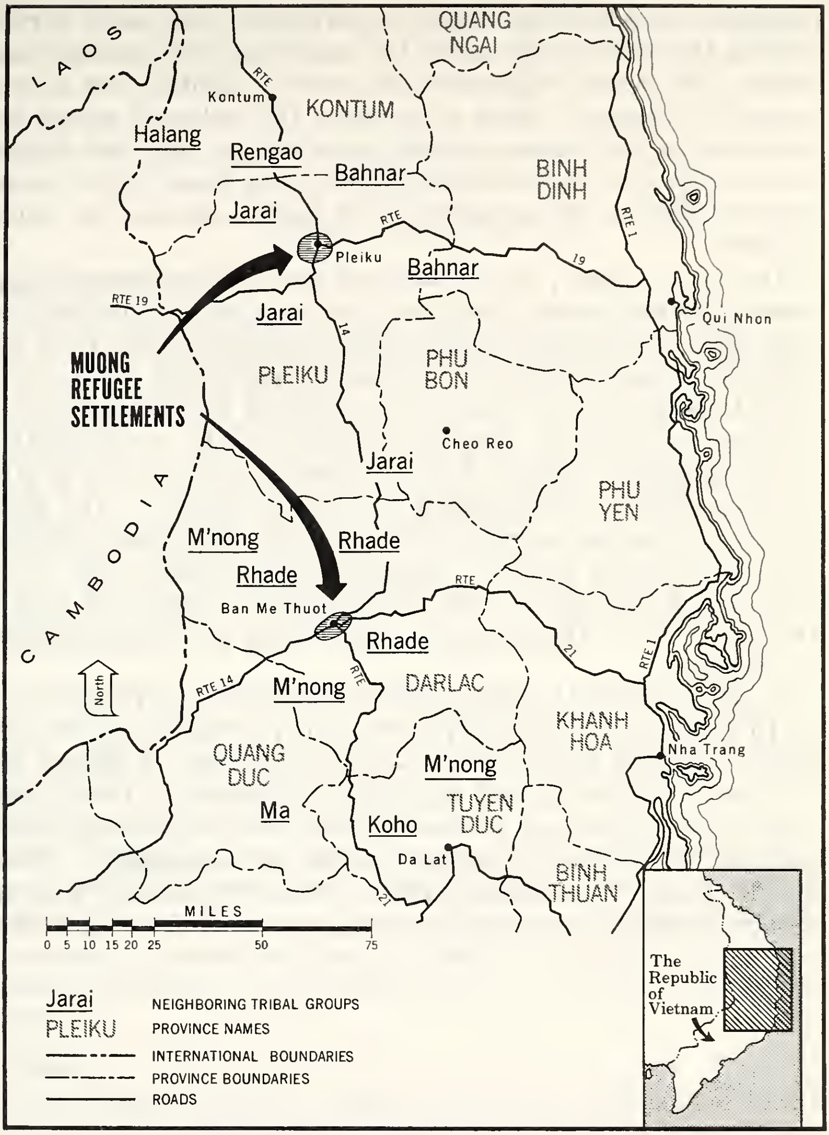
Two groups of Muong refugees have been resettled in the Republic of Vietnam: one group of about 5,000, near Ban Me Thuot; and a second group of about 3,000, near the Pleiku airport.[3] Because all available information refers to the Muong in North Vietnam, the degree to which the Muong refugees retain their traditional culture is unknown. At the very least, however, their relocation to the Rhade and Jarai area is likely to have modified some of their traditional customs.

It is possible that additional Muong refugees have fled to the south, or that the two groups originally resettled near Ban Me Thuot and Pleiku have expanded into other areas; but no further information is available. A 1961 study estimated the Muong population in the Republic of Vietnam to be 10,000 at that time.[4]

The Muong are unevenly distributed, and the shifting locations of their settlements are imprecisely known. On the whole, they are concentrated in the Ho Binh region. Farther away from this central area, their number grows fewer as they mingle with other tribes. There is a slow but constant westward migration, particularly in the Quang Binh region. Although there now are two small, known groups in Laos, more may well have drifted across the border.[5]

Terrain Analysis

The area inhabited by the refugee Muong groups in the Republic of Vietnam is the eastern part of the Darlac Plateau, about 1,500


LAOS
QUANG NGAI
Kontum
RTE
KONTUM
Halang
Rengao
Bahnar
BINH DINH
Jarai
RTE
RTE 1
Pleiku
Bahnar
19
RTE 19
Jarai
Qui Nhon
14
MUONG REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS
PLEIKU
PHU BON
Cheo Reo
Jarai
PHU YEN
CAMBODIA
M'nong
Rhade
Rhade
RTE
Ban Me Thuot
Rhade
21
RTE 1
North
RTE 14
M'nong
RTE
DARLAC
KHANH HOA
QUANG DUC
M'nong
Nha Trang
Ma
TUYEN DUC
Koho
Da Lat
BINH THUAN
21
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50 75
Jarai NEIGHBORING TRIBAL GROUPS
PLEIKU PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
The Republic of Vietnam

Muong Settlements in the Republic of Vietnam

feet above sea level and separated from the coastal plains by the mountains of Binh Dinh. The Ayounh River, a tributary of the Song Ba, drains the extreme eastern part of the plateau; the remainder is drained westward into Cambodia by numerous tributaries of the Srepok River.

The climate of the Darlac Plateau is influenced by both the summer (April through October) and winter (mid-September to

March) monsoon winds. In summer these winds come from the southwest, and in winter from the northeast. Successful agriculture in the area depends upon the rains from the summer monsoons. The winter monsoons also provide rainfall, but only at unreliable intervals. Most of the 50 to 150 inches of annual precipitation in the plateau region occurs during July and August. Temperatures on the plateau are lower than those in the coastal regions, differing by as much as 15 degrees during the winter months.

The soft, powdery, basalt-based red earth of the Darlac Plateau once supported forests. Now, as a result of slash-and-burn agriculture, only small wooded areas remain on granite pegs (like Dhu Ebung near Ban Me Thuot) and along the peripheral chain of hills. With these exceptions, most of the region is a savanna-like plain of grass and bamboo. Here a large part of the undergrowth is tranh (Imperata cylindrica), a tall, coarse grass used for grazing when green and as house thatch when yellow and dry. The northern part of the plateau around Pleiku shows considerable evidence of earlier volcanic activity. Monsoon forest covers much of this area, which is generally free of dense undergrowth and easy to traverse. During the summer rains, however, travel is complicated by flooding.[6]

National Route 14 connects Ban Me Thuot with Pleiku to the north and Duc Lap (Quang Duc Province) to the south. Ban Me Thuot is linked with the coast—with Ninh Hoa in Khanh Hoa Province—by Route 21 and with Dalat by Route 20. Two airfields near Ban Me Thuot—an all-weather field north of the village and a seasonal field to the southeast—provide air accessibility. Pleiku also is the site of a major airfield. Route 19 extends from the Cambodian border and connects Pleiku with the coast at Qui Nhon.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

The Muong are closely related linguistically to the ethnic Vietnamese, but their specific racial and ethnic origins are debatable. One source believes that the close relationship between the Vietnamese and Muong languages indicates that the two groups are the northernmost members of the Mon-Khmer ethnic stock.[1] Another feels the Vietnamese-Muong and Mon-Khmer peoples form two separate but related branches of the original Austroasiatic stock.[2] The Muong may also represent a branch of the Vietnamese people which either moved or was pushed into the back country during the Chinese conquest.[3] In addition, it is quite possible that the language similarity is due merely to proximity.

In any case, the Muong apparently arrived in Indochina at a very early date.[4] One source theorized that the ancestors of both the Muong and the Vietnamese migrated into northern Indochina during the period that the Thai-speaking groups were moving southward through the upland valleys.[5]

The Vietnamese and Muong formed a relatively homogeneous group until the Chinese conquest of the Red River Delta. The influx of Chinese into the area resulted in a Vietnamese-Muong divergence. Present-day Muong social and religious concepts are often described as pre-Chinese replicas of early Vietnamese society.[6]

Language

The Muong language is closely related to Vietnamese and is written in Quoc Ngu script.[7] Possibly Muong is an Annamitic or archaic Annamitic dialect, as suggested by the following comparison:[8]

English	*Annamite*	*Muong*
one	*mot*	*moc*
two	*hai*	*hal*
three	*ba*	*pa*

The language of the Nguon group of Muong (of the Quang Binh region) is especially similar to Annamite.[9]

There are some local variations of dialect among the Muong in North Vietnam. The speech of the Muong of Son Tay, for example, differs from that of the Muong of Hoa Binh in several articulations, accent, and certain vocabulary terms.

Nearly all the Muong can speak or understand Vietnamese.[10] They probably have some knowledge of other languages as well, especially French. They have had frequent association with the French and the Thai as well as with the Vietnamese. The Muong near Nghia Lo in North Vietnam have some contact with Meo and Man tribesmen who come to that area for trade. The Nguon group of Ta Muong associate with the Sach tribespeople in the Laotian border area, and the May and Rue (or Roc) tribes.[11]

Legendary History

The Muong myth of the origin of the world accounts for the distinction between elite and peasant in their society.

According to the legend, the sky created the first man, Ban-Co, who fathered four sons. The first, Phu-Ky, fathered the Chinese; the second, Than-Nong, sired the Annamites; the third, Gich-Rong, fathered the aristocracy; and the fourth, Loc-Tac-An, sired the common people.[12]

Another legend serves as a promise of life after death through the mediation of the great hunter Ta-Kheo-Rauh. One day while hunting on the mountain, Ta-Kheo-Rauh slew a deer which a serpent restored to life by gathering some tree bark and applying it to the wound. When this happened a second time, Ta-Kheo-Rauh followed the serpent and collected some of the magic bark. He placed the bark in the mouth of a deceased person, and from then on all deceased Muong were restored to life in this manner.

The news spread, distressing the gods; Ta-Kheo-Rauh and his miraculous tree were summoned to heaven; henceforth men become mortal again. When the Muong die, they seek out Ta-Kheo-Rauh, who conducts them to the tribunal of the gods and pleads their case, acknowledging the Muong as his descendants. The king of heaven then permits the deceased to remain in the sky instead of undergoing the tortures of hell.[13]

A system of feudal lordship had fully developed by the time of the legendary kingdom of Van Lang. Chiefs were allegedly descendants of the first cultivator of the soil, and from him they derived their religious and judicial powers. The word for feudal lord is *quan lang*, which is the same term used for the sons of Hung, the ruler of Van Lang. Hung allegedly introduced tattooing by directing fishermen to cover themselves with sea monsters to scare away the crocodiles.[14]

Factual History

Although the kingdom of Van Lang is legendary, there is agreement among scholars as to the characteristics of the bronze-age Muong and Vietnamese society before it was disrupted by the Chinese conquest of about 213 B.C. The people had learned to irrigate and produce semi-annual rice crops with nothing more than hoes: the buffalo and the plow were introduced by the Chinese. At the top of the feudal hierarchy were the lords or quan lang, whose authority to control and distribute lands rested on supernatural sanction. The quan lang subdivided their domains among the lesser nobility and the chiefs *(tho lang* or *tho ti)* of villages or groups of villages. Privileges and authorities—civil, military, and religious—were hereditary.[15]

From 213 B.C. until 939 A.D., the area was under Chinese domination, but the Muong were apparently less influenced by the Chinese than were the Vietnamese. In 939 the Vietnamese threw off direct Chinese rule and became a tributary state; the Muong then came under Vietnamese rule.[16]

Although the Vietnamese had abandoned the feudal system by the 18th century, the Muong did not. French influence began in 1802; the Muong rebelled against French control of their territory in 1822, 1826–27, 1833, and again in the 1880's; each time the Muong rebellions were quelled.[17]

In 1923, the French issued a manifesto with the following provisions: the social structure of the various tribal groups was to be respected; trade between the tribes and the ethnic Vietnamese was to be regulated; tribal laws were to be codified and used in the administration of justice; and educational, medical, and agricultural assistance would be given to the highland groups. Since 1954, the governments in both the Republic of Vietnam and North Vietnam have followed policies designed to assimilate the tribesmen into the national fabric.[18]

Settlement Patterns

The Muong generally settle on plateaus or on hillsides near water; they prefer areas of limestone and torrential rivulets to large rivers. In their original locations in North Vietnam, Muong villages exist only at altitudes over 2600 feet. Settlements are located away from main lines of communication and have been moved when a highway came too close to them. Even in areas where a chief's house may stand near the highway, the other houses will be more remote and perhaps screened by trees.

A Muong village is often quite dispersed, with the houses of the tho lang or chief near the center, and the others scattered along the riverbank or on the slopes of hills. The Muong attach relatively little importance to the orientation of the individual houses.

Small footpaths lead to the various houses, but none lead directly from any nearby highway. On occasion there will be 3 or 4 houses as far away as 2 kilometers from the main groups; this is a settlement outpost in which the tho lang himself sometimes resides. In the Hoa Binh area and in scattered parts of northern Thanh Hoa Province of North Vietnam, farmsteads are surrounded by enclosures of bamboo, cactus, or other hedge growths.[19]

The temple of the spirit of the soil, centrally located in the village, is an important structure in any Muong settlement.*

Muong houses, which are raised on 6-foot pilings, are large, rectangular buildings divided into compartments. Houses are generally 19 to 39 feet long by 13 to 19 feet wide. Wealthy or important people have larger houses—up to 130 to 160 feet long and 48 to 65 feet wide. These larger houses are often connected by common verandas or covered walks.[20]

Structurally, the houses are generally of woven or braided bamboo over a wooden frame, with a thatched roof. The interior is divided into several areas, including one with a hole in the floor for a latrine. The main room—used for guests and most family activities—contains the altar of the ancestors and a hearth, located near a window or door so that the smoke can escape. The hearth, a wooden frame lined with clay, is sacred and may not be spat upon or approached by a naked person.[21] The ancestral altar, across from the hearth, consists of either a bamboo vase filled with ashes, a large wooden panel against the wall, or, in the case of the poor, a piece of red paper glued to the wall. There may also be a second altar, sacred to the god of the hearth, consisting of a shelf with two vases filled with sand and incense sticks with a piece of red paper above.[22]

One observer maintains that grain is stored in a corner of the Muong house, under one roof, in woven bamboo baskets kept on boards several feet off the floor.[23] Other sources report, however, that granaries are separate buildings on pilings and are located near the house.[24]

In any case, each house has a veranda at the entrance which serves as a work area, a place to receive visitors, a clothes-drying space, and a miscellaneous storage area. A bucket of water and a dipper are kept in a corner of the veranda for washing the feet before entering the house.[25]

Household furniture consists of a few mats and low rattan and bamboo stools.[26]

Each house has a small yard enclosed by a bamboo fence, and some houses also have a vegetable garden.[27] Houses of the tho lang families are distinguished by a more substantial fence with a wooden door opening upon a second inner door; the vertical fence-posts are linked by braided bands whose numbers increase with the importance of the family.[28]

---

* See "Religion," p. 547.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Generally, the Muong are about the same height as the Vietnamese, averaging about 5 feet 6 inches tall; but the Muong are heavier and more robust. They are usually round faced, with straight, sometimes aquiline, noses and only slightly slanted eyes.[1]

Many ethnic strains can be identified in the physical appearance of the Muong, especially among the males. The appearance of various Muong might closely resemble that of the Vietnamese, Laotians, Chinese, or Cambodians. Such divergence in physical appearance is much less common among Muong women, who, sharing the same general physical characteristics, more nearly constitute a common type. Although most young women have a slender figure and good posture, they soon lose them under the stress of continual hard work.[2]

When they are about 16 years old, most Muong lacquer their teeth. The lacquering is a long and disagreeable, even painful, process, and for several days hard or acidic foods cannot be eaten. After a few years, the blackened teeth turn brown, leaving a mottled appearance. To maintain an even color, the women usually have their teeth lacquered three or four times during their lifetime. About one-fourth of the men do not lacquer their teeth at all, and the rest may do so only once.[3]

Pierced earlobes are rare, as few Muong have the means to buy earrings. Those who do own earrings often prefer to wear them only on festive occasions. When earrings are not worn, the Muong insert a bamboo twig or rolled leaf through the holes in their lobes to keep them open.[4]

Tattooing is not widespread among the Muong; it appears almost exclusively among those groups who live near Thai villages where the art is practiced. Favorite tattoo designs among these groups are a Chinese character and a mark in the shape of an X. The men are tattooed on the back of the hand or on the forearm; the women prefer the middle joint of a finger.[5]

Health

The health of the Muong who reach adulthood may be described as good, since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygienic practices are rudimentary.

The principal disease among the Muong is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal area. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal. The other, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[6]

The three types of typhus found in the Muong areas of the Republic of Vietnam are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[7]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, venereal disease, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the Muong areas.[8]

Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse; some diseases are caused by worms, including hookworms; and some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and lack of sexual hygiene.[9]

The Muong believe illness is caused by the spirits, *ma khu,* which haunt the rocks and forests. When a person is seriously ill, a sorcerer or *thay mo* is asked to identify the tormenting spirit. With an egg suspended by a thread over the patient's clothing, the sorcerer calls out the names of the spirits. A certain movement of the egg indicates the name of the responsible evil spirit, and the sorcerer then tells those attending the patient what sacrifices will be necessary. In payment for his services, the sorcerer reportedly receives a share of whatever is offered to the spirit.[10]

For particularly grave illnesses, a special sorcerer or *thay pol* is first consulted to identify the causative spirit, and then a thay mo offers a white chicken *(kon ka lo)* to this spirit.[11]

In addition to sorcerers and sacrifices to cure the sick, the Muong reportedly use various concoctions made from medicinal plants and herbs. They have also had access to Vietnamese and Chinese druggists, but no information is available concerning the extent to which the Muong use commercial medicines and drugs.[12]

The Muong consider any person 40 years old as aged, although actual senility among them does not occur until later. A Frenchman who lived among the Muong reported that he encountered no cases of senility, but found people as old as 70 still vigorous, especially well-to-do women who had always been attended by servants.[13]

Endurance

The general indolence of the Muong, more a manifestation of their cultural background than an indication of natural laziness, makes it difficult to gauge their overall endurance.

The Muong dislike expending energy and will avoid doing so whenever possible. When engaged in hard work, they will take breaks that last as long as the actual work periods. French colonials who employed Muong tribesmen on their plantations soon got rid of them because of their low efficiency.[14]

Walking is the primary physical activity of the Muong. They seldom undertake long marches; but when they do, they can cover ground at the rate of 30 to 40 miles a day—a pace that can be maintained for several days by either sex. Upon reaching their destination, they are likely to spend several weeks resting.[15]

The Muong generally walk at a steady, unhurried pace; they shift to a jerky, jogging walk when they are in a hurry. Adults seldom run. Their walking rate does not change when they are carrying loads (the average load seldom exceeds 20 kilograms). Rest stops usually last 3 or 4 hours, during which they eat and smoke.[16]

It is probable that those Muong addicted to opium will not have the endurance of tribesmen who abstain from this drug or use it only occasionally.

The Muong are reported to adjust to the warm, humid climate of the lower valleys of Indochina better than the delta peoples, who are often overcome by fever.[17]

Psychological Characteristics

The Muong are generally passive and reserved. Occasionally they are totally indifferent to their surroundings and do not respond to fellow villagers who try to attract their attention; at other times the slightest unusual noise arouses them instantly.[18]

The Muong have been described as being indolent and slow to comprehend. From a Western point of view, their work habits leave much to be desired. However, Muong willingness gradually to apply more advanced Vietnamese techniques to their own economic activities is in strong contrast to the inflexible resistance to change found among many other tribal groups; this willingness has contributed to their relatively higher standard of living. Moreover, the combination of opium and better satisfaction of their basic needs for food and shelter minimizes incentive to progress and contributes to the impression of apathy.

Some sources describe the Muong as passive, unintelligent, hospitable, and tradition bound; others refer to them as vigorous, intelligent, vindictive, and passionately revolutionary. The tribe's size and wide dispersal probably make all of these characteristics applicable to various Muong individuals, but not to the tribe as a whole.[19]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Muong society is patrilineal and distinguished by a strong extended family structure. Traces of an ancient feudal social organization are also evident. The elite class of the feudal hierarchy was characterized by its special customs and privileged landownership. But the Muong have adopted Vietnamese characteristics to the extent that they also have widespread peasant ownership of individual fields and communal ownership of village land. There is a strong feeling of mutual aid in Muong villages; each villager supports his neighbor in local projects. The village chief or tho lang, however, still retains his feudal rights to extensive village labor and a share of the community harvest. The tho lang, whose ancestors are believed to have been selected by heaven, lives apart from the villagers in a large dwelling surrounded by a strong mat fence.[1]

Although the changes in Muong feudal structure have eroded the authority of the tho lang and members of the elite class,[2] the family structure has retained its strength and ancient internal system of authority. The quarrels and indiscretions of individual family members remain a matter within effective family jurisdiction.[3]

Kinship System and Tribal Structure

Apparently there is no overall tribal structure among the Muong except for the division between elite and peasant. The tho lang are a superior group, who seem to have authority only over their own village or group of villages. Their former status was based on their exclusive title to land, woods, and watercourses. It is difficult to describe present conditions, particularly because of the lack of information about either North Vietnamese administration of their Muong areas or the Republic of Vietnam's administration of Muong refugees.

The most important corporate kin group appears to be the patrilineal common descent group, whose members include those related through the male line to a common male ancestor in the fifth ascending generation. The influences of the kin group appear to be more significant among the tho lang, for all these members gather for rituals to honor the common ancestor; among the peasants, only a small group gathers for such ceremonies.[4]

The *ho*, or kin group, is particularly important in regulating marriage and adoption. One cannot marry close relatives, that is, those within the same ho related through common ancestors.[5]

There also appear to be groups known as *familes féodales* which have associated food taboos that vary according to the region. The Quach family of Lac Son, for example, is forbidden to eat dog, while the Quach family of Kin Boi cannot eat the flesh of white buffalo or marsh hen. The Dinh family of Cao Phong cannot eat monkey, while the Kinh family of Duong Son has a taboo against eating panther.[6]

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Patrilineal descent and strong paternal authority distinguish Muong society. The authority of the male head of the family is uncontested, but the next position of authority is held by the first wife.[7] This inconsistency could be a relic of an earlier matrilineal descent pattern among the Muong. In any case, the Muong male authority is much stronger than in many other Montagnard groups in the Republic of Vietnam.

Muong society appears to function around a complex system of shared responsibilities. A Muong will ask for the concurrence of the villagers when he wishes to build a house, and they in turn will share the work. Everyone will collect supplies, such as mountain grasses, and then divide the actual labor according to custom: the young people will install the roof, for example, while the elders supervise. The new owner is obligated to provide a banquet which includes a jar of whiskey.[8] All members of the family assist in gathering the harvest.

Males have the exclusive right to own real property; and the eldest son inherits the bulk of the family property.[9] Among the nobility, where there is more property to share, the eldest son of the first wife inherits the paternal house, the bulk of the property, and the family authority of his father. Other sons of the same wife may also inherit some land. Sons of concubines do not inherit, but the father may provide for them by an allotment of ricefields or cash before his death. In return for his inheritance, the eldest son is expected to support both his widowed mother and any unmarried females in the household.[10]

In general, the men do most of the agricultural work. They also hunt, but this is a leisure-time activity rather than a necessary means of augmenting the food supply. Dogs and gongs are used to flush the game. The men hunt alone or in organized groups under the direction of the tho lang. The sport also functions as training in the use of weapons—an important factor in areas where pirates and smugglers exist.[11] Although some weapons are obtained by trade, the men usually make their own firearms, crossbows, and traps for both game and fish, thus necessitating the gathering of forest bamboo for construction and repair. There is some specialization in the work done by Muong men; that is, there are carpenters and joiners, coffinmakers, and makers of pots and farm implements.[12]

The women are primarily responsible for household tasks and for spinning and weaving cotton. Weaving skill is considered an important attribute in a wife. The Muong prepare several different types of dyes.[13] Women have several additional tasks; they carry water and gather plants, herbs, and wood.[14] Young girls and old women also help the men in the fields.[15] Women have an important and appreciated place in Muong society because they perform so much of the village labor; nevertheless their status is subordinate to that of men and is symbolized by the fact that they do not take their meals with the men.[16]

Children are raised with great laxity and are quite undisciplined. Parents seldom administer bodily punishment, usually only threatening their children.[17]

Marriage

Marriage is exogamous and arranged by intermediaries, although a peasant male actually has considerable freedom in selecting a partner. Some Muong prefer a mate selected from another village, and the nobility require the first wife to be from another fief.[18] Because marriages tend to take place within the same social class, and because a tho lang must find a wife from another tho lang family, persons of the higher ranks have less personal choice of marriage partners. Females marry between the ages of 16 and 18, elite males between 15 and 20, and peasant males between 18 and 25.[19]

Marriage is forbidden between close relatives and those related through common ancestors within four generations, but marriage may be contracted by distantly connected members of the same ho or lineal descent group. It is also possible to marry outside the tribe. The Thai are happy to intermarry with the Muong, but Muong marriage to a Vietnamese is rare.[20]

Parents of the Muong boy initiate marriage arrangements by sending an intermediary to the selected girl's house with symbolic gifts. If the initial overtures are approved, the bride price, the engagement period (5 months to 5 years), and the marriage date are determined. The groom is expected to spend a period of up to 2 years working at the house of his prospective parents before the marriage is officially consummated.[21]

The actual marriage ceremony consists of two significant rituals: the first, before the ancestral altar in the bride's house, signifies her departure from the family; the second, before the groom's ancestral altar, signifies her acceptance into his family. The first ceremony is followed by a feast, and the second—which takes place the evening of the same day—is followed by another feast. The bride returns home at midnight and is claimed by her husband after 3 days.[22]

Of the two types of Muong marriage contracts, the most common is that of buying a daughter-in-law *(khat yu,* or *khat zu).* The bride price is higher during the harvesting season because the groom's family is gaining another worker. The Muong also observe the custom of buying a son-in-law *(khat cao)*, which in practice means that he is promised the inheritance, but he is not exempt from paying a bride price.[23]

The couple live with the groom's parents until the girl is allowed to establish her own household. This permission is usually granted after the birth of the first child.[24]

Divorce and Second Marriage

Divorce is rare, although a man may repudiate his wife on a variety of pretexts if she is still young and can return to her family. Divorce is impossible during a mourning period or if the couple have become poor. A wife can also obtain a de facto divorce by making an extended visit to her parents. If she commits adultery, divorce is obligatory.[25]

Polygamy is permitted and even customary among the nobility, but peasants rarely take second wives. A point of similarity between Muong and Chinese society is the prominent position of the first wife. If the second wife of a member of the nobility comes from the peasant class, she must also act as a servant to the first wife.[26]

Adoption

Muong quite often pay a fee to adopt additional children, presumably to increase their labor force. It is even possible to adopt a son who becomes head of the family, but this process requires that the boy must be of the same kin group as the father and not already an eldest son.[27]

Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth

Because of a combination of high infant mortality and a low birth rate, few households have more than three children. The use of both opium and alcohol apparently reduces fertility considerably. Although the Muong are familiar with the practice, they seldom resort to abortion.[28]

Pregnancy involves no taboos or special practices, and illegitimate pregnancy is punished only to the extent that the families of both boy and girl must pay fines to the village.[29] The forthcoming event is neither proclaimed nor concealed (except in rare cases), so that pregnant women continue to mix with society and perform their ordinary tasks. At this time women may acquire a special talisman and continue to wear it after the baby is born.[30]

When the time of delivery approaches, the house is taboo to strangers, and the mother is secluded behind partitions with a fire kept burning to purify her. One source claims that only relatives assist the mother; a more knowledgeable source asserts that there is some use of midwives.[31]

The placenta is either buried, hidden in the forest, or suspended from a tree. When the taboo has ended, the family announces the birth to the ancestors, makes ritual offerings on the family altar, and holds a feast for friends. The mother herself is considered unclean for a period after the birth and remains secluded in her room.[32]

There is now no standard practice as to whom the birth taboo applies, or for how long. Various signs may announce a taboo, although relatives and even other villagers may ignore it. The restriction ordinarily lasts from 2 to 4 weeks for a firstborn, and from 4 to 5 days for subsequent births. The surest practice is not to visit a new mother at all.[33]

Childhood

Neither the mother nor the father expends any particular effort on the education of the child, nor do they direct or restrain him in any way. He learns appropriate behavior patterns by imitating his elders.[34]

Death and Burial

Mortuary rites are complex, and one report states that the Muong have the unusual custom of retaining the casket in the house for an extremely long period—sometimes several years.[35] Two other sources, however, report burial after 3 days.[36]

When a Muong tribesman dies, his family immediately covers his chest with a cloth. This procedure is to prevent the man's spirit from escaping.[37] The body is placed in a hollowed tree trunk with some personal possessions, and a thay mo (sorcerer) is summoned to pray and officiate at rituals for as long a 3 days. Among the nobility, an additional ritual official is customarily present to announce the death. Mourning signs are placed around the house, and friends and kin gather to offer condolences and share a feast. Both the thay mo and the participating relatives don ceremonial garb. The ritual involves placing a dead dog, rice, alcohol, and incense in a basket tied to the coffin. The deceased is invited to enter the basket and not haunt the living. At periodic intervals, the deceased is also offered a meal.[38]

On the eve of burial, there is a ritual sacrifice of cattle among the wealthy or a pig among the peasantry. The funeral cortege, led by the thay mo, consists of the catafalque, an orchestra, and relatives who periodically prostrate themselves. The Muong place a headstone and footstone on the grave and erect a small thatched house over it. Mourners return in 1 to 3 days for additional rituals and, like the Vietnamese, bring offerings to the grave every 50th day for the first 2 years after burial.[39]

Daily Routine

The Muong are a more developed and prosperous group than are the other Montagnard tribes in the Republic of Vietnam. Unlike most of the other tribes, they engage primarily in the cultivation of wet rice and other crops, rather than in dry rice cultivation. In addition to managing the crops and constructing and caring for their houses, the Muong find time for travel, marketing, and considerable visiting and gossip among themselves. They also hold cockfights accompanied by extensive betting. Of the various games played, a favorite is that of teams of girls competing with teams of boys to throw a ball through a ring on a pole—all the action accompanied by singing, joking, and laughter.[40]

Tho lang families have numerous servants to assist in household tasks.[41] Entertainment for visitors to a Muong family can, therefore, be fairly extensive. In addition to a good meal and conversation involving the retelling of old legends, young girls will sing old, traditional melodies accompanied by various tribal musical instruments.[42]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS

Dress

Muong men, like their Vietnamese neighbors, dress in cotton trousers and shirts, preferring blue garments and short, knee-length tunics. Many Muong wear blue turbans.[1]

The women wear long, blue, sarong-like skirts fastened at the bosom; the top third of the skirt is decorated with various colored threads woven into the blue fabric. They also frequently wear short blouses cinched at the waist by a green belt.

Men wear their coarse, black hair in a knot at the back of the neck; women dress their hair in a similar fashion, sometimes wearing a simple headdress made of a square of cloth pulled to the back of the head.[2]

Muong women and children are very fond of jewelry. The women sometimes wear crude silver jewelry in their hair, and young girls and boys often string amulets or tiger claws around their necks.[3]

Folk Beliefs

The Muong, like all Montagnard tribes, behave according to the dictates of their cultural tradition, a large body of laws, proverbs, and religious beliefs. Local interpretations of these folk beliefs vary, however, from village to village; the Muong, unlike many other hill tribes, have shown a willingness to embellish and change their beliefs to suit local needs. Frequently they have incorporated elements of Vietnamese oral tradition into their own cultural practices.*

Eating and Drinking Customs

The staple of the Muong diet is rice grown by the wet-rice method in irrigated, terraced paddies. However, rice grown by the dry method, although actually less substantial and palatable than that raised in paddies, is often reserved for pregnant women, the sick, and the aged, and wealthy families frequently serve it as a special dish to guests after the other rice has been eaten.[4]

---

*Specific information about various Muong beliefs can be found in the sections on "Religion" and "Tribal Background" in this study.

Chewing and Smoking Customs

All Muong chew betel, the continual use of which eventually discolors the teeth. Opium and tobacco smoking are also favorite habits. Most smokers use a bamboo and porcelain pipe of Vietnamese design.

Use of Opium

Because of the high price of opium, addiction is more common among the rich than the poor, although some individuals reportedly have spent everything on their daily opium ration and allowed their families to starve.[5] Wealthy families that do not use opium will often keep a supply on hand to offer visitors. Addicts often switch from smoking to opium pills, which have a stronger and more immediate effect.

The Muong themselves apparently do not actively engage in opium smuggling; before the Indochina War they obtained the drug through connections with smuggling organizations operated by the Vietnamese and the Chinese.[6]

Customs Relating to Strangers

Generally the Muong are reserved but hospitable in their relations with strangers. It is doubtful that they fully trust a visitor until they have carefully evaluated his intentions. Although they are reported to be affable, any violation of local custom might incur their hostility. An example of such a violation might be the unauthorized entrance of a person into a newly constructed house before the customary interdiction has been lifted. No information is available regarding the application of specific customs and rituals to strangers.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The religion of the Muong has a variety of aspects and pervades all of Muong life. Tribal religion has historically combined a great number of animistic practices with some of the Buddhist and other religious practices of the lowland Annamese. The Muong believe in a large pantheon of supernatural beings, many of which are also found in the oral tradition of the Vietnamese religion. The central theme of the Muong religion is the interrelationship of the Muong cult of the ancestors with the important New Year ceremonies and with the intricate spirit world.

Not only are a great variety of cults associated with different spirits, but the number of spirits differs with each village. Ancestors are honored in communal and familial cults as are the spirit of the mountains, the spirit of agriculture, and the spirit of the hearth. Individuals maintain a cult of living souls, as well as cults of those spirits which protect the soul and the body. Traditionally, after a Muong hunt, a ritual offering of game was made to the spirits of the forest and mountains, depending on the region, and to the spirit of wildlife and firearms.[1] Religious rituals occur frequently with participation by various inhabitants of the Muong village.

The Muong religion is grounded in the concept of death and is expressed in the cult of the ancestors. The Muong believe that the passage from life to death is in stages. Furthermore, the Muong believe the soul is divided into 90 parts and that there are 16 vital or life spirits (7 male and 9 female) which, as death approaches, die gradually. Regardless of how death occurs—by lingering illness or sudden accident—it is considered gradual.[2]

The 90 parts of the multiple soul of the living Muong are separated into two principal divisions: the *wai,* immortal and superior; and the *bia,* regulator of man's animal functions. Only a Muong well versed in his religion can distinguish between the wai and the bia; most Muong use the two divisions of the soul interchangeably.

In the transitional period between life and death, the soul is believed to become a *ma,* a ghostly, errant, and dangerous spirit. Part of the ma goes to heaven, and another part attaches itself to the corpse, hovering first around the coffin and later around the grave. This disembodied soul still retains some memories of its earthly existence. Therefore, the ma has the same needs as the living soul and expects to have these needs satisfied. The Muong feel themselves surrounded by the terrifying presence of the deceased and make daily offerings of food to the dead.

The ma, in this miserable, transitional state, attempts to snatch other souls that are about to leave the world of the living. This act is part of the Muong belief of resurrection, which the Muong think is possible only if vital spirits reenter a body a few hours after leaving it. If several days pass before the return of vital spirits to the body, magical intervention is necessary to coax the spirits back into the body. However, if a long period of time passes, even magical intervention cannot get the spirits to reenter the body.

Many souls do not remain ma—perpetually hovering in the transitional area between the world of the living and the world of the dead. This transitional existence is generally limited to the mourning period observed by relatives. Performance of the final funeral rite permits the spirit to enter the world of the dead and the company of his ancestors; it also allows the mourners to return to their normal routine. Subsequent performance of the rites of the cult of the ancestors is confined to special, solemn occasions, probably memorial ceremonies.[3]

Religious Ceremonies

The principal religious festival of the Muong is the festival of the lunar New Year, called *tet*, *thet*, or *set*, according to the region. Muong New Year rituals are similar to the Vietnamese tet celebrations. The New Year signifies a regeneration of natural energies, the resumption of agricultural work, and the triumph of the forces of budding and sprouting over the inertia and slumber of winter. To celebrate this renewal of natural energies, there is a suspension of human activities. One taboo associated with the New Year period is the prohibition against breaking the soil for planting during the first 3 days of the first lunar month.[4]

The New Year is the longest annual Muong celebration, often involving festivities which last for several days. Although at one time it was earlier, the date now is apparently near the end of January or at the beginning of February. During this period there are rituals honoring the ancestors, family feasts, and much intervillage visiting. Guests in the Muong households are invited to sample alcoholic beverages.[5]

During the last days of the old year, preparations are made for the entrance of the home, the body, and the multiple soul into the New Year. These preparations involve both general housekeeping and ritual ceremonies. The housekeeping activities include cleaning house, polishing the large copper dishes for the offering tables, washing clothes, and baking cakes. Ritual ceremonies prepare the physical body of the souls for the New Year; thus, as an act of purification of the body, the Muong takes a bath on the last evening of the year. On the last day of the year the Muong place offerings on or before their ancestral altars. The well-to-do Muong summon religious practitioners to bless them and to request heaven to give strength and continued good health to the household.

In addition to the New Year's ceremonies, the Muong also have religious ceremonies for the spring season and for the phases of the agricultural cycle. Some ceremonies involve all the villagers under the leadership of the tho lang; others are performed as domestic or family rites.[6]

Religious Practitioners

Diviners, healers, and male and female magicians are an integral part of the Muong society. They not only perform the same traditional rituals as do the rest of the population, but they officiate at public rituals upon request and perform the special rituals of their office.

Sorceresses or *moi** ordinarily remain single; however, those who marry transmit their special skills to the eldest daughter, although hereditary instruction is not a necessary precondition to practice sorcery. The magic practiced by women is considered less powerful than that practiced by men. Although women are usually considered more inherently susceptible to direct mystical revelation than are men, they rarely aspire to the closed society of sorcerers who preserve the tradition of magic lore. Heaven-sent inspiration may make a sorceress ill; inspiration may also occur during an actual illness; a sorceress may sometimes be seized by a spirit causing trances, emotional crises, and physical upset. While this suggests pathological conditions, symptoms are seldom prolonged or acute.

The moi are always under the command of one or more male spirits. Moreover, the moi wear a man's turban or a man's vest beneath their own clothing; when in direct communication with the spirit, they tie their belts as the men do.

A select number of moi, however, are believed to be directly seized by the spirits and do not employ the elaborate preparations of a sorceress who consciously wishes to communicate with the spirits. The moi who speaks in a trance is often later quite unaware of what she has said.

Instruction for sorcery requires training of from 3 to 10 years. The student learns by performing ceremonies corresponding to his or her level of instruction, but during this period, he or she is not permitted to use ceremonial attire.

---

* This term is a specific Muong expression and should not be confused with the general term "moi" meaning savage.

The student begins with the study of the world's origin—the birth of heaven and earth—then the origin of specific things, such as King Nhon, the creator of plants, and the bird, Ol, who gave birth to the human race, and green bamboo. The next step is to learn the first prayers. When the training period has been completed, the sorcerers can perform all ceremonies, those without as well as those with magical elements.

Although initially the sorcerers do not specialize in particular rituals, in some regions, such as the Muong Vang region, they specialize as soon as their instruction is completed. In some Thanh Hoa villages, if sorcerers had not completed their instruction they could not perform funeral rites, for these rites are taught during the final period of the instruction.

Sorcerers are given names according to the types of rituals they perform.

Professional sorcerers—both men and women—consecrate a personal altar to one or more patron spirits. Some worship San Su, the patron spirit of all sorcerers, while others worship their own personal patron spirits. Most sorcerers worship both spirits at the same altar. The women seem to acknowledge more personal spirits than do the men.

Rates for healing services depend on the patient's ability to pay and the length of his illness. However, the disciples of a master sorcerer must pay him in specified amounts or rice, alcohol, chicken, pork, cloth, or some specifically designated object.[7]

Missionary Contact

The Roman Catholic missions established near Muong population centers always contained a core of Vietnamese Christians which the Muong considered a separate colony. Only villages in which there were enough Catholic converts to throw off the religious hold of the village tho lang could be considered Catholic villages. In theory, tho lang's conversion to Catholicism would automatically cause the villagers' conversion; however, such a conversion occurred only once—at the end of the 19th century. Conversion of the villagers would probably not result in the conversion of a tho lang, for once he lost his priestly prestige, he would lose all his privileges. Moreover, even if he did not lose all of his prerogatives, his heirs would certainly lose theirs.[8]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Data about the economy of the Muong in the Republic of Vietnam were not available at this writing. The bulk of the information in this section was drawn from French studies of Muong settlements in the area of present-day North Vietnam; therefore, the data are indicative only of the general background and customs of the relocated Muong.

Type of Economy

Agriculture is the basis of the Muong economy. Secondary economic activities are fishing, hunting, trading, weaving, and carpentry. The Muong have reached a higher level of development than neighboring tribal groups, as manifested by the variety of crops they cultivate, the more permanent nature of their landholdings, and the sophistication of their techniques in agriculture and local industry.

Rice is the staple crop of the Muong who, unlike many other highland groups, engage in both wet-rice agriculture on terraced paddies and slash-and-burn cultivation of dry rice in upland areas. A wide assortment of other food crops are cultivated: corn, sesame, eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes, papaya, grapefruit, beans, beets, betel, mustard plants, and onions. Other agricultural activities include the cultivation of cotton, indigo, castor bean plants, and benzoin trees (balsamic resin trees), and the collection of sticklac (a resinous substance produced by insects) from tree limbs. Domestic animals raised for food are cattle, ducks, chickens, and pigs. Buffalo and cattle are common draft animals.[1]

The Muong engage in various crafts. The women weave cloth for their own garments; material used in men's clothing is usually purchased. Men fabricate their own crossbows and traps for hunting and fishing. Specialized industry exists to the extent that certain skilled artisans will make farm implements, coffins, and cooking equipment for the entire village. It has been reported that some villages had specialists capable of producing an occasional firearm.[2]

Agriculture

The Muong cultivate nonglutinous and some glutinous wet rice in marshy areas around streams and in terraced paddies. Their irrigation system consists of small channels dug along the edge of the terraces; a system of bamboo tubes links the channels, enabling the farmers to control the downward flow of water. In some areas, the terraced ricefields produce two crops: a summer crop in the fifth lunar month and a winter crop in the tenth lunar month.[3]

The Muong cultivate dry rice in the uplands. New fields are opened early in the dry season or late in the rainy season. After selecting a wooded area, the Muong cut and burn the trees and brush. Once the rains have dissolved the ash and loosened the soil, planting begins. A dry-rice plot is cultivated for 2 to 3 years and, whenever possible, is transformed into a terraced, irrigated field.[4]

The Muong use several kinds of natural fertilizer. Special crops, such as manioc, are fertilized with a mixture of hearth ash and buffalo manure. Ashes are spread thinly over paddy fields, and straw is used as a compost around certain plants.[5]

Preparation of fields for cultivation—cutting and clearing the dry fields and plowing the wet-rice areas—is predominantly a male occupation; however, the very young and the old women help during planting, and all members of the family assist in the harvest.[6]

In addition to their daily household and child-raising tasks, Muong women husk rice, water the gardens (with water fetched from the river in 2-meter long bamboo tubes), sow the grain, hoe, cut, and harvest the rice crop. They also wind silk, weave cotton, and gather wild roots, leaves, and shoots from the forest.[7]

Many Muong agricultural techniques, the most advanced among the Montagnards, have been borrowed from the Vietnamese and, to a lesser extent, from the Laotians.[8] Iron-bladed bamboo and wooden plows, pulled by either cattle or buffalo, are employed in paddy and dry-rice agriculture, and wooden harrows prepare the soil. For harvesting, there are machetes, several types of sickles, and various cutting knives.[9]

In certain northern villages the Muong were once considered great hunters, but Muong hunting skill apparently has declined, and the traditional bonds between the hunt and religious life have been loosened—sometimes completely broken. As the need for game as a food staple decreased, fewer Muong men hunted. Gradually, hunting became an excuse for the gathering of the men to march for long hours and to eat and drink more than usual upon their return to the village. In villages where the tho lang was fond of hunting, he would frequently arrange a hunt to celebrate a wedding or the completion of a new house. At one time, some ceremonies required the sacrifices of a deer or boar, so hunting parties would be organized for the hunt; later, however, the Muong substituted domestic pigs for the original sacrifice.[10]

Most male villagers participated in the leisure-time group hunts. Gongs sounded to call men and dogs; the hunting party then moved into the forest, beating the brush before them and striking gongs to flush out the game, stalked by the dogs. The hunters bagged their quarry with crossbows (sometimes equipped with poisoned arrows) and ancient firearms inherited from earlier generations. Game is also taken with traps of bamboo, rattan, and other flexible woods.[11]

By the late 1940's fishing had supplanted hunting as a source of food. Although fishing is more routine and less exciting than hunting, the Muong are still skillful fishermen and netmakers. Their fishing skill includes catching fish with wicker traps and poison. The requirement for plates of fish for certain ritual offerings has contributed to the continuing emphasis on fishing.[12]

Weaving and Dyeing

In contrast to many other Montagnard tribes, the Muong have developed fairly sophisticated techniques of textile production, although this activity has always been confined to the home. The Muong grow cotton and raise silkworms, using cotton and silk for their clothing. More recently, the women weave the material for their own clothing but purchase men's clothing from the Vietnamese, who also supply Muong villages with cocoons, raw silk, and thread.

The dyeing of woven cloth was one of the original feminine skills practiced by Muong women prior to end of the Indochina War. Despite the introduction of aniline dyes, the Muong women continued to use their traditional vegetable dyes to produce indigo, brown, and black on both their home-woven cloth and the white or raw cloth purchased from the Vietnamese.[13] Information is not available to show whether this tradition still exists among the resettled Muong in the Republic of Vietnam.

Property System

The traditional land tenure system, the basis for the feudalistic society that evolved among the Muong, was founded on the right of the first cultivator. The individual who initially cleared and cultivated a plot of land also gained title to the adjacent woods, streams, and surrounding area (not always clearly defined). As this man's family increased, members gained titles to an ever-expanding area, producing a group of noble families who held most of the land in a local area. Whoever wanted to settle the area was required to obtain the permission of the first cultivator or his descendants. If allowed to settle, newcomers were obliged to honor the first cultivator during religious ceremonies. Inheritance of a peasant was never shared except when it was considered large enough to be divided among all of his sons. Among the land-rich gentry, however, the eldest son of the first wife inherited the parental house, most of the other property, and the responsibilities and authority of the father. If the father was the lord of a fief or a tho lang, the son also inherited this title.[14]

Several centuries of Vietnamese influence have gradually changed the Muong system of land tenure; by the late 1940's the system was reportedly almost like that of the Vietnamese, including both peasant proprietorship and communal ownership.[15] The extent to which land ownership among the Muong has been affected by the policies of the present North Vietnamese government is not known. Information concerning arrangements for tribal ownership of land in the Republic of Vietnam was likewise unavailable at this writing.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

Little information is available concerning the present political organization of either the bulk of the Muong who live in North Vietnam, or of the refugees who have been settled near Pleiku and Ban Me Thuot in the Republic of Vietnam.

Traditional Muong political organization closely resembled the European feudal system of the Middle Ages. Two distinct classes existed in Muong society: a large non-land owning peasantry and a small entrenched nobility who exercised political and economic control over the peasantry. Despite a façade of centralized authority and tribal unity, Muong villages were, for most practical purposes, independent, self-contained, self-sufficient political units subjected to occasional interference from outside authority.[1]

When the Chinese withdrew from Indochina in the 10th century, the Muong came under Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) control. The Annamese appointed Muong administrators, who in turn obtained control of large principalities. These Muong and their retainers, supported by the Annamese, formed the original aristocracy of provincial and village chieftains; their descendants inherited the positions of wealth and power.[2]

Various external influences have slowly eroded the powers and privileges of the ruling aristocracy. Although originally permitted to maintain their own laws and frequently to act without the restraint of Annamese authority, many Muong gradually accepted Annamese customs and laws. Even more changes in the traditional Muong political organization have resulted from the French, and, more recently, from the political regimes of North Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam. Moreover, Christian Muong—primarily Catholics—have also modified the political structure.[3]

It can be assumed that the more recent changes are substantial, especially when it is remembered that the Muong in the Republic of Vietnam are resettled refugees from the north, while those still residing in their original lands are subject to the controls of a Communist regime. However, even a people like the Muong, with a facility for acculturation, will attempt to maintain many of the traditional customs and practices of its original social and political order. In all probability, then, both in North Vietnam and in the Republic of Vietnam, the two separate classes of Muong do still exist to some degree, and it is probable that the nobility—or former nobility—still exercise some political authority within the villages.

In the traditional system, the quan lang was a descendant of the Annamese appointees who exercised ownership and administrative control. The quan lang owed fealty to a number of Annamese mandarins, who, in turn, were pledged to the Annamese emperor in Hanoi. There was no Muong king as such; in fact, there was no overall tribal organization among the Muong. Rather, there were only large sections of Muong territory administered by individual quan lang whose allegiance was not to a senior Muong tribesman, but to the Annamese.

Village headmen were vassals of the quan lang. The tho lang or headman had either the original title to all the land claimed by the village or the title bestowed on him by the quan lang. The tho lang, as the ruler of the village, held all political authority and was charged with the responsibility of adjudicating disputes and judging crimes committed by the tribesmen. The tho lang usually lived apart from the village in a separate house and, in the eyes of the peasants, was the lord of the village itself, the keystone of its governing institutions and the symbol of its origin. In most ways the village was an entirely self-sufficient political unit. Except in highly unusual circumstances, little reference was made either to the quan lang or the Annamese.

The tho lang was assisted in his tasks by the *au po,* also a member of the aristocracy, who acted more or less as the executive officer of the village. In most instances the position of au po was a hereditary one, although on occasion a new au po would be named to the position by the village chief or other notables. It should be noted that there is usually no tho lang in villages which have a majority of Catholic residents, nor in the relatively few villages organized along the lines of the Vietnamese villages. Additionally, villages in which a proper male heir is unavailable have no tho lang.

In areas that have a village political structure instituted by the ethnic Vietnamese in North Vietnam, there are usually the following officials: a *ly truong* (administrative chief), a *pho ly* (deputy administrative chief), a *kai lang, ka sa,* or *ko da* (mayor), and the local *au kwyen, kai com,* or *thu ho* (hamlet chiefs). The ly truong is responsible for supervising the local police, for collecting taxes, and for executing orders from higher authorities. In villages where the tho lang has retained his role as leader, he has considerable control over the ly truong. The tho lang may name candidates for the ly truong (often from among his kin), and from them the villagers select the ly truong. Both the ly truong and the pho ly are elected for life. Whereas the ly truong receives a salary that varies from village to village, the pho ly and other minor officials are granted the use of a certain amount of paddy land as compensation for their services.[4]

Definite information dealing specifically with relations between the Muong and their respective central governments was not available at this writing. The regime in North Vietnam claims it allows the various tribes a degree of autonomy under the direction of district zone administrators. In the Republic of Vietnam it is probable that the Muong, particularly because they are resettled refugees, are administered closely by the Central Government.

Legal System

Originally the Muong had their own legal system, which varied in detail from region to region and village to village. Basic to much of the legal system were the traditional customs, mores and religious beliefs. However, many of the Muong adhere to the Annamese legal system, while other Muong have changed many of their traditional laws because of their conversion to Christianity. At present, it is probable that the Muong are subject to and have accepted the laws of both North Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam.[5]

Many traditional Muong laws were rooted in the operation of their feudal system: each of the two classes had, by law, certain privileges, prerogatives, and responsibilities. For example, the aristocracy were obligated to marry only within their own social rank or lose their position.

The peasantry, on the other hand, suffered all the disadvantages of a feudal system; the peasant could not own land, was obligated to labor in the fields of the nobility, and had to give the tho lang a certain amount of produce at the New Year, during certain local feasts, and upon any special event that occurred in the tho lang's family, such as a birth, a wedding, or a death. It should be noted, however, that the tho lang in return had certain obligations toward the peasantry.[6] The tho lang administered all judgments and assigned all punishments. Small infractions of village rules or slight misdemeanors were punished by a few strokes of a rattan whip, while more serious offenses were punished by fines. On the occasion of an exceptionally serious or complex crime or judgment, the quan lang might assume jurisdiction.[7]

Subversive Influences

There is no information available concerning subversion among the Muong residing in the Republic of Vietnam and practically none on the main group in the north.

In 1956, the North Vietnamese took cognizance of the tribesmen's objections to the Government's centralizing policies by giving the northeastern part of the country—where the Tho subgroup of the Muong live—internal autonomy very much like that granted them by the French.[8] It thus appears likely that any subversive tendencies among the North Vietnamese Muong will be suppressed either by similar concessions or by coercive measures if necessary.

Since the Muong appear to have migrated south to escape Communist rule, the Viet Cong would probably have great difficulty subverting the groups that have been settled near Ban Me Thuot and Pleiku.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information among the Muong is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning Muong familiarity with or access to radios. Any radios in operation in the Muong settlements in the Republic of Vietnam were probably brought in by military personnel.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using either the Muong or the Vietnamese languages might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

Written communication might have some effect on the Muong. Although most Muong are illiterate, the tribe does have a written language and some of the tribesmen can read Vietnamese and French. The literate tribesmen could be expected to communicate information in written materials to the rest of the tribespeople. Data about the use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Muong should be oriented around the principle of improving conditions in the refugee settlements. Protection against Viet Cong harassment and the control of disease are also possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Most Muong tribesmen would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained: the Muong adopt new ideas more readily than many other tribal groups, but they do resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.[1]

Current civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities in the Muong refugee settlements.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the settlements are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by foreigners.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the tribesmen by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Muong encompass all aspects of daily life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.

    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farm lands.
    e. Insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.

2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcasting and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.

3. Health and sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.

4. Education
    a. Provide basic literacy training.
    b. Provide basic citizenship education.
    c. Present information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Unless given Government training and support, the Muong cannot effectively resist the Viet Cong.

Villagers who are given adequate training and support would presumably defend themselves.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

In the past, the Muong relied upon crossbows, spears, and knives. Some Muong received military training from the French and are familiar with modern weapons; before the Indochina War, the Muong reportedly produced some of their own firearms.[1]

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Muong can absorb basic military training and concepts. They learn techniques and procedures readily from actual demonstration, using the weapon itself as a teaching aid. They do not learn as well from blackboard demonstrations, an approach which is too abstract for them.

Muong who are veterans of service with the French are invaluable in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE MUONG

Every action of the Muong tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Muong may not react as outsiders do.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Muong are listed below:

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Muong village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village headman, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Muong. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Muong tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.

Social Relationships

1. The Muong should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Muong ceremony, festival, or meeting from the persons responsible for the ceremony.
3. An outsider should never enter a Muong house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing

from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.

4. Outsiders should not get involved with Muong women.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Muong property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Muong language. A desire to learn to speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Muong are aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Muong settlements should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and should have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 171.
2. Louis Malleret, "Le Groupe muong," *Les Groupes ethniques de l'Indochine francaise* (Saigon: La Societe des Etudes Indochinoises, 1937), pp. 14–15.
3. U.S. Information Service, *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands* (Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962), pp. 19–20.
4. E. H. Adkins, *A Study of Montagnard Names in Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, February 1962), p. 6.
5. Jeanne Cuisinier, *Les Muong: Geographie humaine et sociologie* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, Musee de l'Homme, 1948), pp. 25–28.
6. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 47, 56, 63.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Paul K. Benedict, "Thai, Kadai, and Indonesian: A New Alignment in Southeastern Asia," *American Anthropologist,* IV, Part 1 (October-December 1942), pp. 576–601.
2. Joseph Greenberg, "Historical Linguistics and Unwritten Languages," *Anthropology Today,* edited by A. L. Kroeber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 281.
3. Malleret, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Charles Robequain, *Le Thanh Hoa: Etude geographique d'une province annamite* (Paris: G. Van Oest, 1929), pp. 110–13.
6. U.S.I.S., *op. cit.*, p. 17.
7. *Ibid.*
8. A. Cheon, "Notes sur les dialectes nguon, sao et mu'o'ng," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient,* VII (1907), p. 87.
9. L. Cadiere, "Les Hautes vallees du Song-Gianh," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient,* V (1905), p. 356.
10. U.S.I.S., *op. cit.*, p. 17; A. Cheon, "Note sur les Muong de la province de Son-Tay," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient,* V (1905), pp. 340–41.
11. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–48; Robequain, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–131.
12. E. Lunet de la Jonquiere, *Ethnographie du Tonkin septentrional* (Paris: Leroux, 1906), p. 347.
13. Henri Deydier, "A Propos d'un conte Mu'o'ng," *Bulletin de la Societe des Etudes Indochinoises,* XXIV (1949), pp. 47–49.
14. Le Thanh Khoi, *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et civilisation* (Paris: Editions du Minuit, 1955), pp. 49, 81–82, 116.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 87–88; Joseph Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), p. 76.
16. Le Thanh Khoi, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 81–82, 116.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 360, 382–83.
18. Buttinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–244, 325–85.
19. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 71–75.
20. A. Bonhomme, "Au Pays muong," *Revue Indochinoise*, XXVI (July-August 1916), pp. 33–34; Malleret, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–90.
21. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*
22. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 344.
23. Nguyen Van Huyen, *Introduction a l'etude de l'habitation sur pilotis dans l'Asie du sud-est* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geunthner, 1934), p. 179.
24. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–90; Robequain, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–12.
25. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–32; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–90.
26. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
28. E. Castagnol, "Les Muong," *Indochina*, V (April 1964), pp. 29–30.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
2. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
3. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 62–63.
6. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–13.
10. Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 347.
11. Cheon, "Note sur les Muong," *op. cit.*, p. 343.
12. *Ibid.;* Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
13. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–67.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
18. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 211–12.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 243–56.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 211–12.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
8. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Huyen, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
9. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
10. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 280–83.
11. Castagnol, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–29; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 129–39, 147, 154–80, 214.
13. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 215, 220–22.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 129–39.
15. Castagnol, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
16. *Ibid.*; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 352.
17. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
18. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 243–56.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 260–76.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 260–67; Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 348–49.
22. Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 348–49; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 260–76.
23. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 270–76.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 256–59; Cheon, "Note sur les Muong," *op. cit.*, p. 345.
25. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 276–77.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 256–57.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 277–80.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 417; Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 347–48.
30. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
31. Cheon, "Note sur les Muong," *op. cit.*, p. 345; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
32. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 419, 443–85.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 417–18.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
35. Malleret, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
36. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 443–85; Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 350–52.
37. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44.
38. Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 350–52; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 443–85.
39. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 443–85; Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44; Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 350–52.
40. Castagnol, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–29.
41. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 256–57.
42. Castagnol, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30.

V. CUSTOMS

1. Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 345; Malleret, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Cheon, "Note sur les Muong," *op. cit.*, p. 341.
4. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 180–81; Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
5. Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 343–44.
6. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

VI. RELIGION

1. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–62, 380–414.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 340–45, 499–501.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–62, 340–43, 380–414.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 498–522.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 415–16.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 486–98.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 284–86.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–99, 111–13, 145–46.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 214, 215, 220–22.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–13.
4. Robequain, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
5. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–18.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 129–39.
7. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
8. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–18.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–48.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–48, 154–80.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–48.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 215–16.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 280–83, 287–93.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 287–93.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Malleret, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
2. Lunet, *op. cit.*, pp. 353–58.
3. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, p. 284.
4. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–37; Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 354; Cuisinier, *op cit.*, pp. 29–30, 384, 295–310; Malleret, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
5. Lunet, *op. cit.*, p. 354.
6. Cheon, "Note sur les Muong," *op. cit.*, p. 342.
7. Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
8. Bernard B. Fall, "Commentary on 'The Tribesmen,'" *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959), p. 138.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 343.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Cuisinier, *op. cit.*, pp. 147–48.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE MUONG

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adkins, E. H. *A Study of Montagnard Names in Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, February 1962.

Benedict, Paul K. "Thai, Kadai, and Indonesian: A New Alignment in Southeastern Asia," *American Anthropologist,* IV, Part 1 (October-December 1942), 576–601.

Bertrand, Gabrielle. *Le Peuple de la jungle.* Paris: Société l'commerciale d'Édition et de Libraire-Édition "Je Sers," 1952.

Bonhomme, A. "Au Pays muong," *Revue Indochinoise,* XXVI (July-August 1916), 29–50.

Bonifacy, Auguste. "Note additionelle sur les prétendus Muong de la province de Vinh-yen," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* VII (1907), 357–59.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Cadière, L. "Les Hautes vallées du Song-Gianh," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* V (1905), 349–67.

Castagnol, E. "Les Muong," *Indochine,* V (April 1964), 24–30.

Cheon, A. "Notes sur les dialectes nguon, sao et mu'o'ng," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* VII (1907), 87–99.

———. "Note sur les Muong de la province de Son-Tay," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* V (1905), 328–48.

———. "Note sur les prétendus Muong de la province de Vinh-yen," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* VI (1906), 341–42.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

———. *Les Peuples de la péninsule indochinoise: Histoire-civilisation.* Paris: Dunid, 1962.

Condominas, Georges. "Aspects of a Minority Problem in Indo-China," *Pacific Affairs,* XXIV (1951), 77–82.

Cuisinier, Jeanne. *Les Muong: Géographie humaine et sociologie.* Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, Musée de l'Homme, 1948.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Deydier, Henri. "À propos d'un conte mu'o'ng," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXIV (1949), 47–53.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Fall, Bernard B. "Commentary on 'The Tribesmen,'" *Viet-Nam: The First*

Five Years. Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 135–40.

Fraisse, André. "Les Tribus so de la province de Cammon (Laos)," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXV (1950), 171–85.

———. "Les Villages du Plateau des Boloven," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), 53–72.

Gourdon, Henri. *L'Indochine.* Paris: Larousse, 1931.

Gourou, Pierre. *Land Utilization in French Indochina.* New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945.

Greenberg, Joseph. "Historical Linguistics and Unwritten Languages," *Anthropology Today.* Edited by A. L. Kroeber. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

Grossin, Pierre. "La Province muong de Hoa-binh," *Revue Indochinoise* (1925), 217–57, 433–55.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

———. "Problems of Social Change in Viet-Nam," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXXIII (1958), 407–18.

Huyen, Nguyen Van. *Introduction à l'étude de l'habitation sur pilotis dans L'Asie du sud-est.* Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geunthner, 1934.

Jame, Raymond. "Les Provinces du Tonkin," *Revue Indochinoise* (1940), 717–25.

Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. "The 'Slash-and-Burn' *(Ray)* Agricultural System of the Mountain Populations of Central Vietnam," *Proceedings of the Ninth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association*, VII. Bangkok: Secretariat, Ninth Pacific Science Congress, Department of Science, 1959, 56–59.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Le Thanh Khoi. *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et civilisation.* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955.

Lunet de la Jonquière, E. *Ethnographie du Tonkin septentrional.* Paris: Leroux, 1906.

Macy. "Études ethnographiques sur les Khas," *Revue Indochinoise* (1907), 240–49, 479–83, 781–86, 868–86.

Malleret, Louis. "Le Groupe muong," *Les Groupes ethniques de L'Indochine française.* Saigon: La Société des Études Indochinoises, 1937.

Martin, J. M. "Voyage au Laos," *Missions Catholiques*, XXXI (1899), 462–66, 477–80, 488–91, 497–501, 508–10.

Mir, Henri. "Monographie du Chau de Lac-thuy (pays Muong)," *Revue Indochinoise* (1906), 874–90, 957–81.

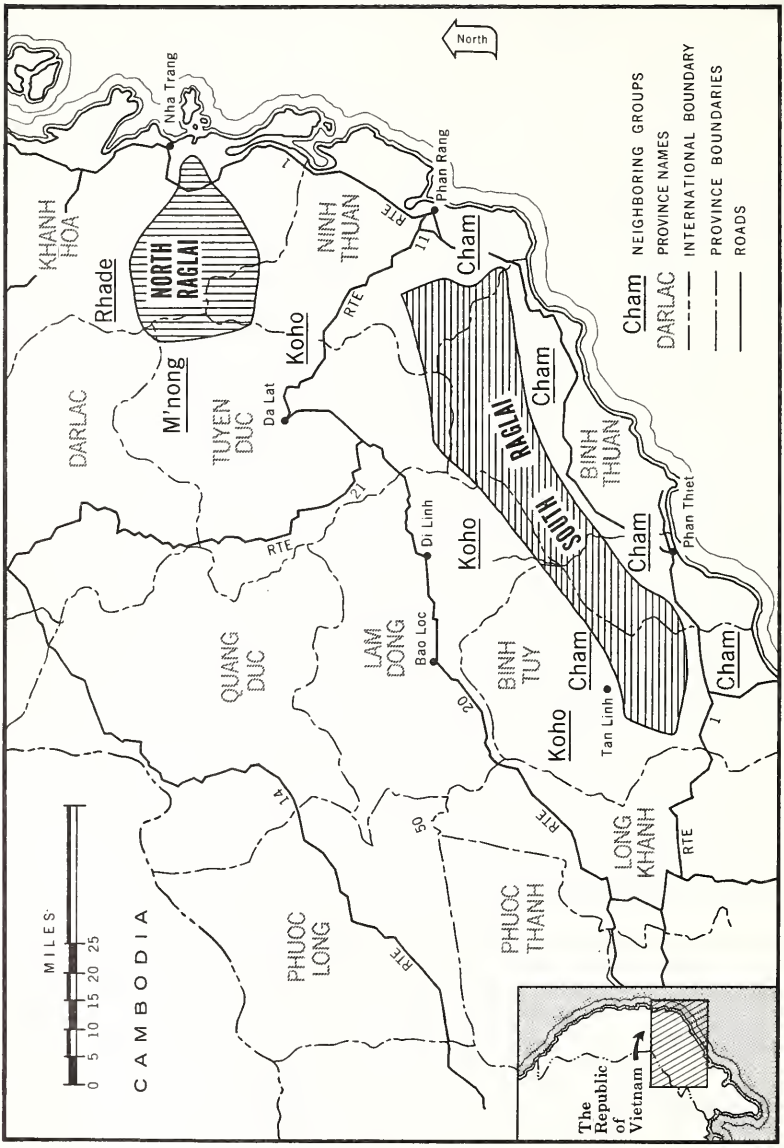
Nguyen-Thieu-Lau. "Les Étangs dessechés de la région de Mu'o'ng-man," *Bulletins et Travaux de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, V (1942), 131–34.

Robequain, Charles. *Le Thanh Hoa: Étude géographique d'une province annamite.* Paris: G. Van Oest, 1929.

Roux, H., and Tran-Van-Chu. "Les Tsa Khmu," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XXVII (1927), 169–222.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964.

U.S. Information Service. *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands.* Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962.


North
Nha Trang
KHANH HOA
Rhade
NORTH RAGLAI
Phan Rang
NINH THUAN
RTE 1
11
Cham
Koho
RTE
M'nong
DARLAC
TUYEN DUC
Da Lat
SOUTH RAGLAI
Cham
BINH THUAN
Phan Thiet
Cham
RTE 21
Di Linh
Koho
QUANG DUC
LAM DONG
Bao Loc
20
BINH TUY
Cham
Tan Linh
Koho
Cham
1
LONG KHANH
RTE
RTE
14
50
PHUOC LONG
PHUOC THANH
RTE
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25
CAMBODIA
The Republic of Vietnam
Cham NEIGHBORING GROUPS
DARLAC PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS

The Raglai

CHAPTER 14. THE RAGLAI

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Raglai live inland from the coastal cities of Nha Trang and Phan Rang in the Republic of Vietnam to the north and south of Cham settlements. They speak a Malayo-Polynesian language related to that of the Rhade and Jarai.

The Raglai have a matriarchal social organization and live in widely dispersed villages in mountainous terrain. All aspects of their social, political, and economic life are influenced by their strong animistic religious beliefs. The village unit is autonomous and represents the highest level of political organization among the Raglai.

Name and Size of Group

The Raglai, sometimes called "Orang Glai," or "Men of the Forest," are a tribal group numbering approximately 40,000 people; half are a northern group located in the mountains west of Nha Trang, and half a southern group who live to the west of Phan Rang.[1] On ethnographic maps the Raglai are usually divided into these two geographic groups.

Location and Terrain Analysis

The Raglai inhabit two separate areas near the coast of the Republic of Vietnam. The Northern Raglai area is in the mountains west of Nha Trang in Khanh Hoa Province. Some Northern Raglai villages are also found in eastern Tuyen Duc Province and northern Ninh Thuan Province. The Southern Raglai live in a long strip of mountainous land roughly paralleling the coast from Phan Rang in the north to Phan Thiet in the south.

The Northern Raglai region is bordered on the west and south by the Koho groups, including the Kil and Tring. The Rhade live to the north, and the M'nong to the west, to the east are the settled, lowland peoples, including the Cham and the ethnic Vietnamese. The Raglai, like the Rhade and Jaria, have been influenced culturally and linguistically by the Cham.

The Southern Raglai area is bordered by the Koho groups on the west and the Cham and the ethnic Vietnamese on the east.

The areas inhabited by both Raglai groups are very rough and mountainous. The high mountains in the western portions of the Raglai areas (some peaks rise to 6,000 feet) isolate the Raglai from the neighboring Koho groups.[2] Some Raglai villages are on the floors of deep valleys, while others are perched on the sides of steep mountains. The villages are small and are linked by narrow trails cut through underbrush.[3]

The summer monsoon (May to mid-September) and the winter monsoon (November-March) provide a regular seasonal alternation of wind. These winds come mainly from the southwest in the summer and from the northeast in the winter. Agriculture is greatly dependent upon the monsoon-borne rain. Precipitation is high—averaging more than 80 inches in the lower elevation and more than 150 inches in the higher areas.

Temperatures vary by roughly 20 degrees between summer and winter. Actual surface temperatures average 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in winter (January) and above 85 degrees Fahrenheit in summer (July). These temperatures are lower than those of the coastal regions, and the Raglai complain about the warmer climate in the lowlands.[4]

The high and relatively evenly distributed precipitation gives this area two distinct belts of rain forest vegetation. At the higher elevations is the first belt, the primary rain forest, where the trees, with an average height of 75 to 90 feet, form a continuous canopy, with occasional breaks by trees 125 to 150 feet high. Below this canopy are smaller trees of 45 to 60 feet in height, and below this second layer is a fair abundance of seedlings and saplings. Orchids, other herbaceous plants, epiphytes, and woody climbing plants known as lianas are profuse. Little light penetrates this tvpe of forest, and there is not much ground growth. During the dry season, this forest usually can be penetrated on foot with little difficulty.[5]

The second belt or secondary rain forest, which develops after land in the primary rain forest has been cleared and then left uncultivated, is more extensive in this area. In this forest the trees are small and close together, and there is an abundance of ground growth, lianas, and herbaceous climbers. Penetration is difficult without the constant use of the machete.

Before the present Vietnamese conflict, the Raglai traveled by raft down the numerous rivers to the coastal cities of Nha Trang, Phan Rang, and Phan Thiet.[6]

The road from Phan Rang to Da Lat passes through Raglai territory, following the general route of the inland railroad which links these two cities. The north-south coastal highway, Route 1, skirts the edge of the Raglai regions and also parallels the main north-south railroad.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

According to their language and culture, the Raglai may be grouped with the Malayo-Polynesian peoples in the East Indies. The Raglai language is similar to those of peoples on islands as widely separated as the Philippines and Sumatra, as well as those of the Rhade and Jarai tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam.

Opinions vary about the geographic origin of the Malayo-Polynesian peoples in the Indochinese peninsula. Some authorities believe that they migrated from the Indonesian area to Indochina. Others think they originated in the Indian subcontinent, migrated eastward, and then spread from the Indochinese peninsula to Indonesia and the islands of the Pacific. Another theory is that the tribes migrated to Indochina from China proper and that the Polynesians were originally settled in the Chinese coastal region of Kwangtung before sailing south and east.

Language

The Raglai language belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian language family and is related to the languages spoken by the Rhade and Jarai. Because of the isolation of their villages, the Raglai have some variations in dialect, but all the dialects are mutually intelligible. Because of the 6,000 foot barrier of the Annamite Mountains in the western part of the Raglai area, few Raglai have learned the dialects of the neighboring Koho groups. Some Raglai, however, understand French and Vietnamese.[1] The Raglai, as do most other Malayo-Polynesian tribal groups, have a special, sacred poetic language in which traditions, laws, and legends are chanted. Some scholars believe that this special language is the source from which the local tribal languages have been derived.[2]

Missionaries from the Christian and Missionary Alliance have been developing a phonetic alphabet for the Raglai language and are translating both religious and secular works into the tribal language. These efforts have been hampered by local Viet Cong terrorism,[3] and it is not currently known whether or not the missionaries have completed their work to develop a written form of Raglai.

The following are samples of Raglai words which have been phonetically transcribed. To show the similarity of Raglai to another Malayo-Polynesian language—Rhade—and their difference from a Mon-Khmer language—Koho—the words are given in all three tribal languages.[4]

English	*Raglai*	*Rhade*	*Koho*
one	sa	sa	dul
two	dua	doa	bar
four	pa	pa	puan
six	lonam	nam	prau
seven	tojuh	kjuh	poh
ten	sopluh	pluh	jet
fire	pui	pui	ous
rice	brah	braeh	phe
cooked rice	sei	esei	piang por

Legendary History

The oral tradition of the Raglai encompasses legends of the origin of the tribe, the spirits, and the world. Because they have had no written language of their own, the Raglai have passed down by word of mouth not only legends, but anecdotes about tribal members, proverbs, and traditional tribal laws. To preserve the traditions unchanged, the Raglai usually recount and chant them in verse form. These stories are told in the evening around the family hearth or are used as invocations during religious ceremonies.[5]

Factual History

After they were expelled from the coastal areas of Indochina, the Raglai moved to the Annamite Mountains into the area between Phu Yen and Binh Thuan Provinces. Their proximity to the more culturally advanced Kingdom of Champa resulted in considerable Cham influence on Raglai customs and language.

In the 15th century, as Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) rule was extended and consolidated, the isolated Cham troops and settlers were forced to abandon the northern highland areas. The Cham set up bastions in Khanh Hoa and Ninh Thuan Provinces; they and their Montagnard allies, including the Raglai, successfully fought the Annamese for 200 years and maintained their territory in Ninh Thuan. Finally, however, the Cham gave up the struggle, and the Montagnards came under Annamese rule.[6]

The Annamese exacted heavy taxes and "gifts" of ivory, rhinocerous horns, and wood from the Raglai near Nha Trang. The abuses of local Annamese officials became so onerous that in the 19th century the Annamese Court of Hue issued an edict against such practices in order to discourage tribal violence and reprisals.[7]

The Court of Hue established a line of demarcation between the Annamese and the Montagnards. However, when the Annamese wanted to settle fertile land in Montagnard territory, the line was moved and military settlers were sent to guard it. In 1887 some of these military settlers, called Homo, established themselves in the mountains west of Phan Rang and recruited Raglai tribesmen to work in their ricefields. As a result the Raglai moved higher into the mountains.[8]

Settlement Patterns

The Raglai live in small villages in clearings on mountain slopes or on the floors of deep valleys. The village sites are generally near streams; villages are connected by narrow trails through the secondary forest growth that covers the hills.

The Raglai house is constructed of bamboo and elevated on pilings. The thatched roof is made of palm leaves. The house is divided into compartments: in the center is the reception or common room; on the right and left of the entrance are the sleeping rooms. The paddy (unhusked rice) is kept in a special section of the house. There is a garden enclosure in front of the house, where the family grows secondary crops such as bananas, papayas, tomatoes, and betel. Pigs are kept in a sty a short distance from the house.[9]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Raglai are a short, sturdy people with light brown skin. Their hair is blue-black. Normal height ranges from 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 4 inches, and the weight of the average adult male is about 115 pounds.[1]

Health

The health of the Raglai who reach adulthood may be described as good since they have survived in spite of a very high infant mortality rate and exposure to many endemic diseases. Village sanitation and the tribesmen's personal hygiene are rudimentary.

The principal disease among the Raglai is malaria—most tribespeople contract it at least once during their lifetime. Two common types of malaria are found in the tribal area. One, benign tertian malaria, causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal. The other, malignant tertian malaria, is fatal to both infants and adults.[2]

The three types of typhus found in the Raglai area are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among all the Montagnard tribes.[3]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal diseases, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the Raglai area.[4] Disease in the tribal area is spread by insects—including the anopheles mosquito, rat flea, and louse—or caused by worms—including hookworms. Some diseases are associated with poor sanitation and sexual hygiene.[5]

Nutritional diseases are widespread in this area. The intake of calcium and iron is satisfactory, but deficiencies in the intake of thiamine, riboflavin, and vitamins A and C have been reported.[6]

Dental diseases are common and severe, causing the teeth to fall out or become too loose to function.[7]

Some tribesmen near towns have been successfully treated in clinics or health centers, but they retain a strong belief in traditional healing techniques.[8]

The Raglai, like the other highland tribes, believe that illness is caused by the activities of evil spirits. Occasionally an illness may be considered the just punishment of a tribesman who has violated a traditional law or taboo. Only the sorcerer can cure an illness; his function is to identify the responsible spirit and to conduct the appropriate sacrifice.[9] The sorcerer has no scientific knowledge but relies on a fixed ensemble of special, inherited traditions.

Sorcerers among the Raglai reportedly use the following healing technique. The sorcerer boils a certain leaf and looks into the pot to see whether the arrangement of the leaf fragments calls for a sacrifice of a chicken, pig, or buffalo. Then the appropriate animal is killed ceremonially. At night, after the sacrifice, the sorcerer lights hand-molded candles near the sick person and hangs bells over him. The sorcerer jangles the bells and chants:

> Oh Spirits, may your evil natures be appeased. Give health, give strength, give adequate breath; become incarnate in me.[10]

The sorcerer then goes into a trance during which he is believed to visit the world of spirits where he discovers the outcome of the illness. When he recovers from the trance, he reports his findings to the assembled family, and further sacrifices are made.[11]

Psychological Characteristics

A missionary reported that the Raglai are a ferocious people.[12] However, another source says that the Raglai are innocent, capable of surprising frankness, and, above all, hospitable, receiving visitors with great courtesy and inviting them to partake in meals with the family.[13]

Still another source has noted that the Raglai are extremely industrious and willing to work hard, especially when the work is for some aspect of community betterment. The Raglai are also eager to learn and reportedly absorb new ideas rapidly. They learn best through the use of visual aids and by demonstrations which allow them to imitate the instructor's action.[14]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Raglai social structure is organized along extended family lines and resembles that of the Jarai and Rhade tribes. The family name is transmitted through the female line, and all property is owned and inherited by the women.

Although the eldest female member of the family exercises control over property distribution, she is advised in other decisions by her eldest brother. Even though married and living in a separate household, this man retains a role in the affairs of his sister's family. His authority is not of the restrictive "police type," but commands respect for his position as the eldest male of the blood line. He is expected to interpret traditions and to apply them to problems requiring such judgments. In the Raglai language, the word for this maternal uncle is a special term expressing respect. The tribesmen also use this special term as a formal mode of addressing a superior or an aged man.[1]

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Labor is divided among the Raglai according to sex. Women care for the children, carry water, cut wood, husk rice, feed the animals, gather herbs and roots from the forest, plant rice, and weed the ricefields.

Men hunt, fish, clear and burn the forest to make the ricefields, and construct the houses. Children play and look after the animals and younger children.[2]

When old men can no longer engage in the strenuous physical activity involved in clearing the forest, they undertake other tasks in the village: they carve handles for the machete-like *coupe-coupes*; plait mats; braid carrying baskets; make pipes; appraise the value of animals, jars, and iron goods; and recount the oral traditions of the tribe.

Old men also fulfill the political function of elders and have positions as maternal uncles. The word of the old men in family or other discussions is considered the voice of wisdom. Even though women control all property, the elder man's advice is sought and carries authority.

Marriage

Among the Raglai, courtship is initiated by the boy rather than by the girl, an unusual practice in a matrilineal society. After a couple has been courting for a period of time, the girl tells her parents that she wishes to marry. The two families then discuss the marriage arrangements, including the property the boy will bring into the marriage. Once agreed, the marriage is celebrated with a sacrifice and feast, the cost of which is borne by the family of the boy's mother.

After the marriage ceremony, the boy lives in the house of his wife's mother, and undertakes agricultural activities with other males of the family. The boy's connection with his own family is not ended, however, if he has sisters, because of the voice he has in the affairs of his sister's family.[3]

Birth

As the time of delivery of his child approaches, the Raglai father goes into the forest to obtain certain roots and herbs to brew a tea for his wife. The herbal tea is used to ease labor and birth. The husband is not only present but assists in the birth. The event probably occurs inside the house.

Following the birth there is a period of taboo which may last for 7 days. During this taboo the wife is not permitted to leave the house, and only members of the family are allowed inside. This is a critical time for both the mother and the child, and the taboo may be interpreted both as a means of protecting the child and of permitting the mother to regain her strength. When the taboo is lifted, the mother returns to her regular tasks.[4]

Naming the Child

Usually the mother and her brother immediately select a name for the newborn child. The name, however, is not revealed for about 6 years as the Raglai believe that the malevolent spirits cannot harm the child if they are ignorant of its name. The subterfuge is further complicated by the choice of an unattractive pseudonym to help conceal the child's identity and to protect him from evil influences.[5]

Childhood

Infant mortality rates are high, and the children that survive are greatly loved and treated permissively. Children are never allowed to remain unhappy: if a child cries, he is immediately picked up and comforted. Small children are taught to look after younger children and to mind the animals. When a child is about 6, he learns about the cultivation of rice. This information can be given by the mother who, at the end of the dry season, places a drop of water on the child's ear and says:

> Don't forget this moon [the one before the coming of the rains] which teaches us the cycle of rice cultivation; one can't stay at home anymore, one must now work in the fields. Remember this each year when the first rains begin to fall.[6]

Education

Fixed traditions perpetuate the tribal standards of behavior. Boys and girls not only grow up learning the skills expected of their sex, but are immersed in the oral tradition of the tribe from an early age. Custom molds and bends the child, who learns to think within the limits of the legends, laws, proverbs, and traditional wisdom of his tribal group. The traditions of the tribe are comprehensive, covering every aspect of behavior. The authority of these traditions governs the tribesman; consequently, the Raglai's horizon and thinking are limited.[7]

Death and Burial

When a Raglai dies, his fellow tribesmen cut down a tree to prepare a coffin. They section and split the tree, hollow it out, and use the split-off part as a lid. Poorer members of the tribe may be buried wrapped only in a blanket and tree bark.

Burials are accompanied by animal sacrifices. The ceremonies provide food and goods for the use of the deceased in the afterlife and keep away the spirits responsible for the death, thus preventing the spirits from causing another death.

The dead are interred in the ground, and the burial place is preserved for a certain period, during which sacrifices are conducted at the site. After a final ceremony, the grave site is abandoned.[8]

Daily Routine

The daily routine of the Raglai begins in the early morning with the first meal. The women get up and pound the rice to remove the husk and prepare it for the first meal; they also feed the animals.

After the first meal, everyone goes to his tasks. The men leave to hunt or prepare the fields for planting; the women go to the forest in search of edible roots and herbs.

At noon a light snack may be taken, and in the evening the second full meal is eaten around the family hearth. This meal is usually prepared from leftovers from the first meal of the day. After supper members of the family tell stories, exchange news, and gossip about the events of the day. Everyone goes to bed about 10 o'clock.[9]

The daily pattern is frequently interrupted by events such as births, deaths, and religious ceremonies and varies somewhat according to the season.[10]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Raglai activities are regulated by numerous customs and taboos. Prescribed methods and procedures govern everything from dress to the construction of houses, from the settlement of disputes to patterns of individual behavior. The Raglai have transmitted these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the Raglai are constantly trying to avoid actions, activities, and contact with objects or animals which might displease the spirits. Tribesmen in regular contact with outsiders may not observe their customs and taboos as closely as tribesmen living in greater isolation from outside influences.

Dress

Raglai dress, like that of other highland tribes, is quite simple. Men wear a loincloth and have adopted such articles of western clothing as T-shirts and army surplus jackets. Christian Raglai men wear white shirts as a symbol of their adherence to the western faith. Women wear skirts wrapped around the waist. Ordinarily the tribespeople are barefoot. For protection against winter cold they wear a blanket over their shoulders.[1]

Tribal Folklore

The Raglai have a tradition of legends, proverbs, riddles, and humor. This material, transmitted orally from generation to generation, greatly influences the Raglai and his way of looking at the world.

Folk tales and legends are customarily told in the evening around the hearth: stories, narrated in long poetical form,[2] tell of the origin of the world, legendary heroes, human heroes, activities of the spirits, and animals (rather like Aesop's Fables).

Folk Beliefs

The Raglai have three general classes of taboos: taboos forbidding the saying of certain things; taboos which, if broken, require sacrifices to restore the normal order of things; and taboos which prohibit mixing certain things together.

A Raglai taboo forbids cutting into the ground with the iron cutting edge of the machete or coupe-coupe. This restriction probably applies to other metal cutting instruments as well, as the Raglai believe that spirits reside in the ground. Furthermore, the dead or sick must not be transported across cultivated fields. Firewood can be gathered only after the harvest is safe in the granary.

There are also taboos against placing a child's head on the basket which is used as a base for the cooking kettle, against serving food during the meal from pottery kitchen utensils, and against using borrowed utensils to prepare a meal. The family hearth and associated equipment are considered sacred because of their function in the preparation of mountain dry rice—a grain believed to be sacred.

Another taboo involves bathing: Raglai men may not bathe or wash in a stream if there are women bathing downstream.[3]

Eating and Drinking Customs

The Raglai believe that rice, the diet staple, was given by the spirits, who taught them to cultivate and prepare it as a food. Other items in the diet include herbs and vegetables. Although the Raglai seldom eat meat and fish, they have the reputation, according to neighboring tribes, of eating very well.[4] Reportedly, the Raglai do not serve food from pottery utensils. The Raglai generally use bowls and dishes for their meals, but some groups eat from small woven baskets.[5]

Water is the usual Raglai beverage, but for ceremonial occasions, they drink rice wine brewed in antique pottery jars. The tribespeople drink the rice wine through long straws, taking turns in the order of their importance. All participants are obliged to drink, for the Raglai believe the spirits would be offended, and therefore the ceremony ineffectual, if anyone abstained.[6]

Customs Relating to Animals

The buffalo is considered the prime sacrificial animal, while pigs and chickens are adequate for lesser occasions. In the eyes of the spirits, during a sacrifice the buffalo represents man and the desires of the family, house, or village offering the sacrifice. Once sacrificed, the flesh of the buffalo (which is divided among the spirits, family, and village) represents a kind of communion uniting them all.[7]

Customs Relating to Houses and Villages

At particular times a house or village may be declared taboo so that no one may enter or leave. Such taboos may be applied to the entire village or to any individual dwelling on the occasion of sacrifice, illness, birth, or death. Taboos on entering or leaving a house or village may last as long as 7 days. The taboo is designated by a barred village gate, a string across the gate, or perhaps a carved stick placed on or near the entrance to the house or village. These signs are subject to local variation, and one should not enter a village if there is any indication that such a taboo is in effect.

In or near the village there may be a small sacred grove which the tribesmen believe is inhabited by spirits. A rock or unusual natural formation may have a special religious significance. The tribesmen avoid such sites for fear of antagonizing the spirits.[8]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Raglai have been in contact with the lowland Cham and ethnic Vietnamese for many years. Before Viet Cong infiltration, some tribesmen came from the mountains to work at Nha Trang. They also brought goods down the rivers for trade with the peoples along the coast. By 1965, however, Viet Cong activities in their territory have prevented Raglai trading trips to the coast and have led to the flight of some Raglai to resettlement areas nearer the coastal cities.

Visitors in a Raglai village reportedly were received with great hospitality. But if the Raglai are offended by a visitor who violates a taboo, they reportedly become openly hostile. Few travelers enter the Raglai territory because the mountains are so rugged. The Vietnamese have not attempted to settle in the Raglai area because they prefer to live at lower altitudes. In the late 1950's missionaries from the Christian and Missionary Alliance finally established limited contact with the tribe.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

Religion plays a dominant role in the lives of the Raglai. The anamistic beliefs of the tribesmen involve faith in a large pantheon of good and evil spirits called *yang*. Understanding of these spirits and of the requirements for successful interaction with them through the use of appropriate rituals, ceremonies, taboos, and sacrifices is passed orally from generation to generation. Although specific details of the oral tradition may vary with each village, the fundamental beliefs and practices are similar throughout the Raglai area.

Principal Spirits

The Raglai pantheon includes a supreme being called Nhang. Companion spirits are associated with the sun, moon, earth, sky, thunder, and such terrain features as mountains, patches of forest, and prominent rocks. Spirits are also thought to inhabit animals, as well as wine jars, the family hearth, tools, and other inanimate objects. The Raglai do not construct temples or other buildings for the purpose of housing or worshiping the spirits. Some spirits are considered good, and others are considered evil, but all are believed able to cause misfortune in the form of accidents, illness, and death.[1]

Many Raglai travel to Bumong to offer sacrifices. Bumong is the traditional burial site of two legendary heroes. Together these two heroes are referred to as the spirit of Bumong, and their worship in the Raglai area may almost be considered a special cult.[2]

Religious Ceremonies

Sacrifices are the core of religious ritual among the Raglai and, depending on the occasion, apparently may be performed by almost anyone. Usually sacrifices affecting the village as a whole are conducted by the village elders, while family and personal rites are the responsibility of the family elders or the individual concerned.

Most sacrifices involve an invocation to the spirits, which invites them to the offering, and expresses to them the wishes of the person making the sacrifice. When the sacrificial animal (buffalo, pig, or chicken) has been killed, its blood and flesh are ceremonially displayed in bowls with rice and other foods. Prayers are said during the ceremony, and all the participants drink from wine jars. The tribesmen believe that the spirits partake of the offering in the bowls, just as the tribespeople partake of the rice wine and cooked portions of the sacrificed animal.

Sacrifices may be held on a grand scale involving a number of buffaloes and the participation of several villages.

Among the Raglai most sacrifices are held in the winter, from the end of the harvest in December to the beginning of planting in April. This entire winter period has been described as highly festive. The fresh harvest, of course, provides rice for the sacrificial wine. Individual sacrifices correspond with the harvest, the storage of the paddy, and the clearing and sowing of the fields.[3]

Religious Practitioners

While ceremonies of the agricultural cycle are conducted by the elders of families and villages, healing ceremonies are conducted by a sorcerer or *bojau*, who usually serves a group of villages in the vicinity of his own home. While in a trance he determines the nature of the illness, identifies the responsible evil spirit, and decides what sacrifices are appropriate for the cure.[4]

Reportedly there is a loose organization among the Raglai bojau. Apparently led by a bojau in the village of Choah, near Bumong, this organization appears to be associated with the worship of the spirit of Bumong. Every January the bojau make a pilgrimage to Bumong for a special sacrifice; at a time near the spring equinox (21 March) the bojau again make a pilgrimage for a lesser sacrifice. The bojau are also reported to honor hierarchical distinctions among themselves, but the nature of this hierarchy was not known.[5]

Missionary Contact

The Christian and Missionary Alliance sponsored several missionaries in the Raglai area in the early 1950's. The missionaries reached the Raglai through the conversion of a Raglai bojau named La Yoan, who himself conducted missionary activity in the region. Viet Cong operations in the Raglai area ultimately hampered the efforts of the missionaries, and the villagers with whom they were working were evacuated by raft to resettlement areas near the coast.[6]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Raglai have a subsistence economy based primarily on the slash-and-burn cultivation of rice by families on lands under communal village control. The ricefields, cleared by the slash-and-burn technique, depend solely on rainfall for irrigation. Briefly, this technique involves clearing the fields by cutting and burning all vegetation in the new area. The ashes produced serve as fertilizer which makes the soil rich enough for 3 to 4 years of crops. When the fields no longer support a crop, the village moves to a new area, allowing the old fields to return to jungle, and repeats the slash-and-burn clearing of the new area.

As secondary crops, the Raglai raise corn, manioc, cotton, giant squash, sugarcane, various vegetables, and fruit trees in their kitchen gardens. They also hunt and fish to supplement their diet.[1]

Little information was available concerning special arts or skills of the Raglai. They do engage in basket weaving and pottery making and they apparently make some cloth from locally grown fibers.[2]

Exchange System and Trade

The Raglai ordinarily use a barter system for trade among themselves. They have, however, engaged in money transactions when they trade with the Cham and Vietnamese in the coastal towns.[3]

Although the Raglai once brought goods on rafts to trade with the coastal towns, Viet Cong operations in their territory have almost completely stopped this trade. Military activities have likewise eliminated the itinerant Vietnamese who brought various goods (particularly salt) into the tribal area.[4]

Property System

All property is inherited, controlled, and disposed of by the women of the tribe. Before any item can be sold by a Raglai, the senior woman in the family must give her permission. Of all Raglai property (ranging from animals to jewelry) gongs and the antique jars used to brew rice wine are considered the most valuable.[5]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

Like the other Montagnard groups of the Republic of Vietnam, the Raglai lack an overall tribal political organization. The largest political unit is the autonomous village. Sometimes neighboring villages connected by marriage will cooperate, celebrate buffalo sacrifices together, and lend each other rice in times of need. These informal relationships, however, do not constitute a formal organization.

Nor is there a central form of authority within the village political unit. Authority to dispose of economic assets belongs to the senior women of the extended families living in the village. Formal political authority rests in the eldest brothers of the senior women. These brothers make up the council of elders which meets informally to deliberate matters important to the village as a whole. Family problems are settled within the family itself by its eldest members. Tribal traditions, as interpreted by the family and village elders, serve as the basis of social control in the Raglai village.[1]

Under the colonial administration, the French appointed a village functionary or chief in addition to the customary council of elders. This official, selected from among the villagers, acted as a liaison between the French and the villagers; he collected taxes and relayed French wishes and decrees. The available information does not indicate if there are still appointed chiefs in Raglai villages.

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapprochement between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government had supported a policy of permitting the Raglai and other tribes to be separate administrative entities. Now, however, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

The Vietnamese Government administers relationships between tribal villages and has assigned an official to be responsible for groups of seven or eight villages. Above this level there are district and provincial chiefs. Through this administrative hierarchy, the Vietnamese Government administers tribal affairs and transmits its orders to the village level.[2]

Legal System

Raglai laws are part of their oral tradition and are in the form of taboos and prohibitions. Because of their age, experience, and position, village and family elders interpret and apply these laws to specific cases. They also have the obligation to hand down the laws unaltered to succeeding generations.[3]

The Raglai believe that a broken law upsets the harmony of the world by disturbing the spirits. Harmony can be restored only when the guilty person makes the correct sacrifice to the appropriate spirit and pays a fine to the village (and to the family of the offended person, if the crime was against an individual). The Raglai do not imprison to punish.[4] There was no indication in the available information that trials by ordeal are utilized.

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[5]

Under the French administration, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[6] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This effort was connected with the Vietnamese program to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal law and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[7]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[8] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[9]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[10]

At the national level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard Presiding Judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[11]

Subversive Influences

Their isolation and marginal subsistence make the Raglai susceptible to Viet Cong subversive activities. Heavy Viet Cong infiltration in 1965 reportedly resulted in the flight of some tribesmen to resettlement areas nearer the coast, as well as an end to Raglai travel to coastal cities for trade.[12]

The primary objective of the subversive elements is to win the allegiance of the Raglai and to turn the tribesmen into an active, hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals. Usually a slow process, this is achieved by providing community services and medical aid and by adopting tribal mores and customs.

Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the next phase is an intense propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Then individuals are recruited, trained, and assigned to various Viet Cong support or combat units.[13]

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror, which usually results in passive resistance to the Government or active support for the Viet Cong.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of disseminating information in the Raglai area is by word of mouth. No information was available at this writing concerning Raglai familiarity with or access to radios. Any radios in operation in the Raglai area were probably brought in by military personnel.

Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Raglai language might be effective in communicating with the tribesmen.

Written communication might have some effect on the Raglai. Although most Raglai are illiterate, some of the tribesmen can read French and Vietnamese. The literate tribesmen could be expected to communicate information in written materials to the rest of the tribespeople. Data about the successful use of printed materials are not available at this time.

Information themes to be used among the Raglai should be oriented around the principle of improving conditions in the tribal villages. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, and protection against Viet Cong harassment are possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account the religious, social, and cultural traditions of the Raglai. Initial contacts in villages should be made only with the tribal elders in order to show respect for the tribal political structure. The tribespeople should also be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Most Raglai tribesmen would probably respond favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local, community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for innovations should be thoroughly explained; the Raglai resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of some Raglai tribespeople into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and the provision of educational facilities.[1]

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote central government or by foreigners.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Raglai encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
   b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health and animals.
   c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
   e. Introduction of insect and rodent control.
   f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   c. Construction of motion picture facilities.
   d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   a. Improve village sanitation.
   b. Provide safe water supply systems.
   c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   a. Provide basic literacy training.
   b. Provide basic citizenship education.
   c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Given the incentive and motivation and provided with the necessary training, leadership, and support, the Raglai can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen can serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Raglai can be organized to defend their villages against the Viet Cong; with good leadership, they can be organized into an effective counterguerrilla combat unit.

In the past the Raglai were considered capable fighters, whether fighting offensively in raids against other groups or defensively within their villages. The Raglai were recently reported to be ferocious fighters, but no specific details are available to substantiate this assertion.[1]

No information was available at this writing which described the participation of Raglai tribesmen in modern military operations. Nor was there any information stating whether the Raglai have been trained by the French, Vietnamese, or United States military forces.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

Very little information was available about the weapons used by the Raglai. Their traditional weapons were crossbows, spears, and knives. An early account reported that the Raglai tipped their arrows and spears with virulent poison obtained from the upas *(antiaris)* tree. A strong preparation of this poison apparently caused death within minutes.[2]

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE RAGLAI

Every action of the Raglai tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Raglai may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require complex religious or social rituals.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Raglai are listed below:

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Raglai village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Raglai. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Raglai tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some credit for civic action projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Raglai should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Raglai ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Raglai house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Raglai women. This could create distrust and dissension.
8. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not mock Raglai religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Raglai life.
2. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Raglai property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Raglai language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the Raglai tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Raglai are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Raglai areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.

2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and should have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Henri Maître, *Les Jungles moi* (Paris: Émile Larose, 1912), p. 400; Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 251; Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XIV (Winter 1961), p. 13.
2. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), p. 964.
3. Jacques Dournes, *En suivant la piste des hommes sur les hauts-plateaux du Viet-Nam* (Paris: René Julliard, 1955), pp. 19–20.
4. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 47–71.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 82–84.
6. Homer E. Dowdy, *The Bamboo Cross* (New York: Harper, 1965), p. 191.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 964; U.S. Information Service, *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands* (Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962), p. 20.
2. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*
3. Dowdy, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
4. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 968-69.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 1046–47.
6. Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), p. 38.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 37–38, 44, 72.
9. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1002; Nguyen Van Huyen, *Introduction à l'étude de l'habitation sur pilotis dans l'Asie du Sud-Est* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste/Paul Geunthner, 1964), p. 52.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Dowdy, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–91; Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 943–44; U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965), p. 188.
2. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–13.

6. U.S. Department of Defense, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense, *Republic of Viet Nam: Nutritional Survey, October–December 1959* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1960), p. 100.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–13.
8. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1025.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 1028–29.
10. Dowdy, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid*, p. 90.
13. U.S. Information Service, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
14. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1086.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 944–49.
3. M. Georges Maspéro, *Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS: 13443) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962), p. 50.
4. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1088.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 1090–91.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
9. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 944–1017.
10. *Ibid.*

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1071–72.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 1046–52.
3. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
4. Dournes, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
5. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
6. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1023–24.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 1146–47.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 1050–51.

VI. RELIGION

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1130–32; Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
2. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1177–79.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 1158–60; Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
4. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1172–77.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 1125, 1177, 1180.
6. "Raglai Sorcerer Becomes Preacher," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), pp. 8–9.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Dowdy, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Dournes, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
2. Dowdy, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–95.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
5. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1086–87.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*
2. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), pp. 1–4.
3. Dam Bo., *op. cit.*, pp. 1099–1105.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 1102–16.
5. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
6. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), pp. 20–21.
7. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation," *op. cit.*, p. 1.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Dowdy, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
13. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962* (Saigon: Directorate General of Information, Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information, 1962), p. 119.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Dowdy, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
2. Maître, *op. cit.*, pp. 120–21.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE RAGLAI

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bitard, Pierre. "Notes sur le Mon et les dialectes mon-khmers." *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises, XXXI* (1956), 303–307.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Dournes, Jacques. *En suivant la piste des hommes sur les hauts-plateaux du Viet-Nam.* Paris: René Julliard, 1955.

Dowdy, Homer E. *The Bamboo Cross.* New York: Harper, 1965.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), 393–561.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Huyen, Nguyen Van. *Introduction à l'étude de l'habitation sur pilotis dans l'Asie du Sud-Est.* Paris: Librairie Orientaliste/Paul Geunthner, 1964.

Ingram, C. G. "Raglai Opportunity Now," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), 10.

Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. "The 'Slash-and-Burn' *(Ray)* Agricultural System of the Mountain Populations of Central Vietnam," *Proceedings of the Ninth Pacific Science Congress of the Pacific Science Association,* VII. Bangkok: Secretariat, Ninth Pacific Science Congress, Department of Science, 1959, 56–59.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

"Malaria in Viet Nam," *Time* (August 20, 1965), 43.

Maspéro, M. Georges. *Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS: 13443) Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XIV (Winter 1961), 13.

"Raglai Sorcerer Becomes Preacher," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), 8–9.

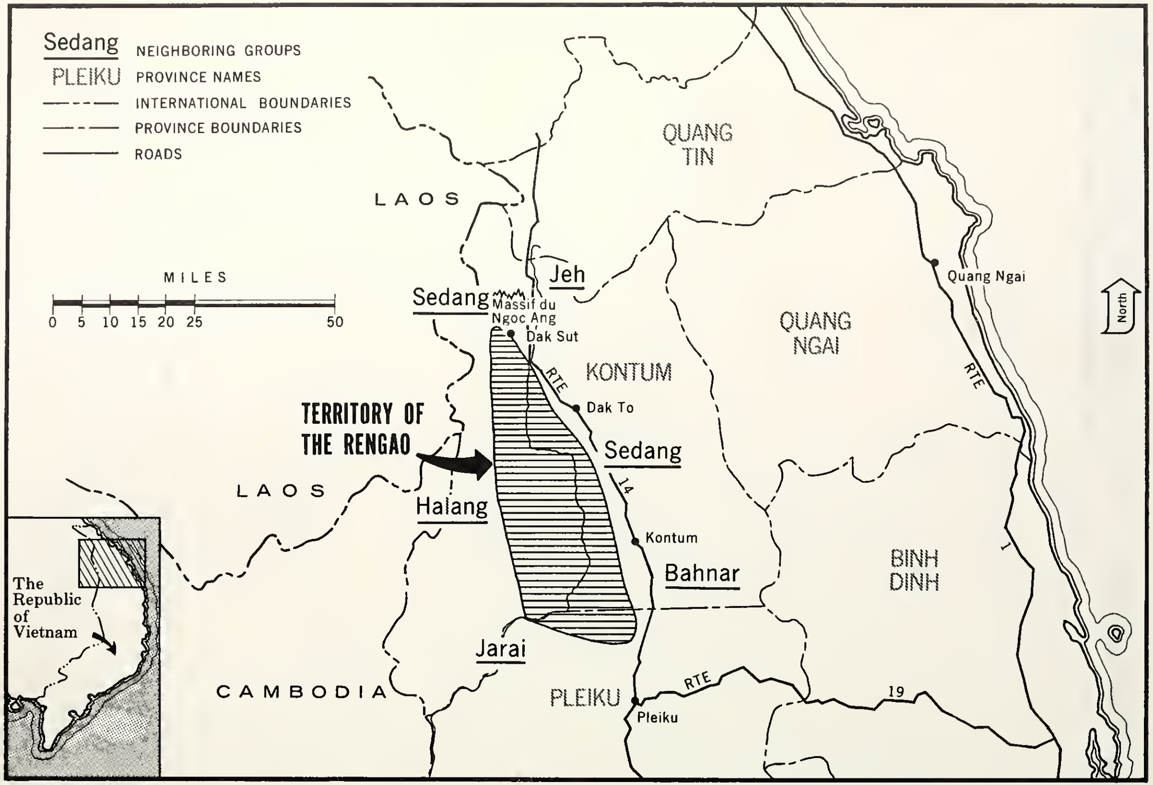
Republic of Vietnam, Directorate General of Information. *Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Diem Administration: 1954–1962.* Saigon: Directorate General of Information, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of Defense, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense. *Republic of Viet Nam: Nutritional Survey, October-December 1959.* Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., July 1960.

U.S. Information Service, *Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands.* Saigon: U.S.I.S., July 1962.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964.


Sedang NEIGHBORING GROUPS
PLEIKU PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
LAOS
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGAI
KONTUM
BINH DINH
PLEIKU
CAMBODIA
LAOS
Sedang
Massif du Ngoc Ang
Dak Sut
Jeh
RTE
Dak To
Sedang
14
Kontum
Bahnar
Haiang
Jarai
Pleiku
RTE
19
1
RTE
Quang Ngai
North
TERRITORY OF THE RENGAO
The Republic of Vietnam

The Rengao

CHAPTER 15. THE RENGAO

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Rengao, one of the smaller Montagnard tribes of the Republic of Vietnam, inhabit a mountainous region west of the city of Kontum. They have long been known as one of the more belligerent highland tribes.

The Rengao are of Mon-Khmer ethnic and linguistic stock and speak a language related to that of the neighboring Bahnar. The village units of the Rengao form the highest political organization of the tribe. Religion plays an important role in the lives of the tribesmen: they believe that spirits and ghosts constantly intervene in human affairs.

Name and Size of Tribe

The name Rengao, variously spelled Reungao, Rongao, Ro-ngao, and Rangao, is a Bahnar word meaning "frontier" or "border."[1] This name was applied to the group when they were considered the westernmost subgroup of the Bahnar tribe.[2] Although there are no accurate records of the exact number of Rengao, it has been estimated that they number approximately 10,000 persons.[3]

Location

The Rengao live in autonomous villages scattered over a strip of land extending from the border of Pleiku Province in the south, through the center of Kontum Province, to the north near Dak Sut. The rugged Massif du Ngoc Ang, a compact group of mountains, dominates the terrain to the northwest.[4] Bordering the Rengao are the Halang on the west, the Sedang on the north and east, the Bahnar on the southeast, and the Jarai on the south.[5]

Terrain Analysis

In general, the region inhabited by the Rengao consists of rounded hills, some of which rise as high as 6,000 feet. Towards the north, the terrain is quite rugged, with granite outcroppings reaching 7,000 feet in height.[6]

The Bla and the Po Ko Rivers join in the Rengao area and flow south to form the Se San River, a tributary of the Mekong.[7]

The Rengao region is covered with a moderately heavy forest, which is generally easy to traverse, except during the summer rainy season. During the winter the forest turns brown, and many of the trees lose their leaves. Part of the undergrowth is *tranh (Imperata cylindrica)*, a coarse, tall grass with which the Rengao thatch the roofs of their houses. When young, this grass provides grazing land for domestic animals. Bamboo growth is found in low, wet areas and in recently abandoned fields. The bamboo protects seedling trees, and eventually the forest again covers these areas.[8]

The climate of the Rengao area is influenced by two monsoon winds, one coming from the southwest in the summer (April to mid-September) and the other from the northeast in the winter (mid-September to March). Agriculture is greatly dependent on the summer monsoons, which bring as much as 150 inches of rain yearly and create local floods.[9] Temperatures in the region are approximately 15 degrees lower than those along the coastal lowland regions.

National Route 14, running northwest from Kontum, skirts the eastern portion of the Rengao area. Another route running west from Dak To to the Laotian border crosses the Rengao territory. An airfield at Kontum provides seasonal air accessibility to the region.[10]

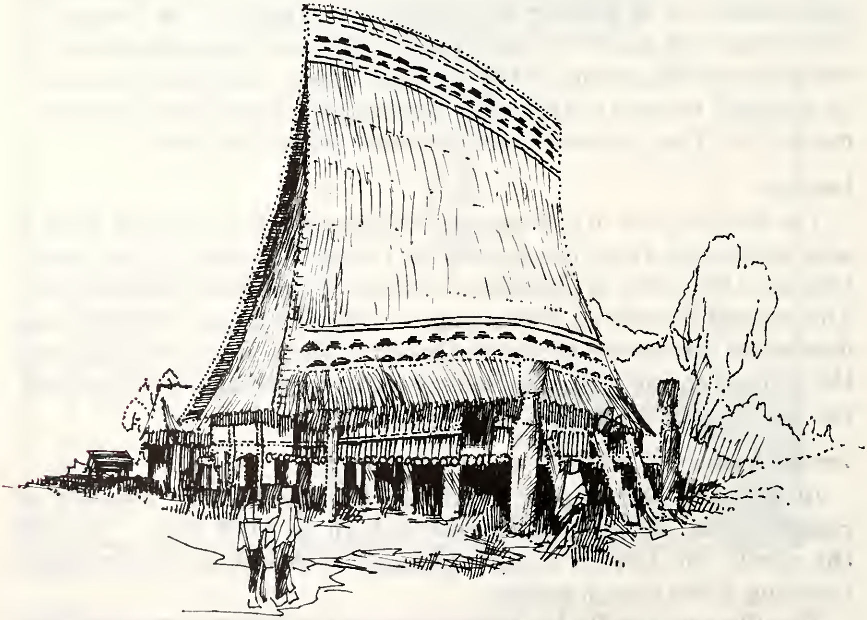


Figure 40. Rengao communal house.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

In terms of language, customs, and physical appearance, the Rengao are classified with the Mon-Khmer ethnic grouping and are related to the Bahnar, Sedang, Stieng, Halang, and M'nong tribes.[1] It is generally believed that the Mon-Khmer ethnic grouping originated in the upper Mekong valleys, from whence they migrated in many directions.[2]

Opinions vary as to the specific ethnic and social origin of the Rengao. Some sources maintain that the Rengao are a subgroup of the Bahnar; others, that they are a subgroup of the Sedang; and a few, that they are related to the Jarai and the Halang. The consensus seems to favor the belief that the Rengao evolved from intermingling of the Sedang and Bahnar. Because their language, history, and social organization seem more closely related to the Bahnar than to the Sedang, the Rengao have frequently been classified as a subgroup of the Bahnar.[3]

Language

Linguistically the Rengao belong to the Bahnaric grouping of the Mon-Khmer language stock.[4] There is no written Rengao language, and the few literate tribesmen learned the written form of the Bahnar language in missionary schools. A few Rengao have a knowledge of French or Vietnamese, obtained through military service or attendance at Government schools.

Legendary History

Legends explaining the tribal origin, the spirits, and world are part of the larger oral tradition of the Rengao, which also includes tales of legendary heroes, anecdotes about tribal members, proverbs, and traditional tribal laws. To preserve the traditions unchanged, they are usually chanted in verse form, most frequently in the evening around the family hearth or as an invocation to a religious ceremony.[5]

According to legend, the Rengao believe that rice was given to them by the goddess Yang Xo'ri. One day while Yang Xo'ri was on her way to participate in a Rengao sacrifice, she saw some tribesmen digging roots to eat. She took pity on them and gave them rice seeds to plant. Henceforth, rice was the basic Rengao crop and the chief staple of their diet.[6]

Factual History

In view of the limited and fragmentary data available, it is extremely difficult to present an historical account of individual Montagnard tribes. Consequently, the recorded history of the Rengao has to be treated in most instances as an integral part of overall Montagnard history, which itself appears mostly in unpublished reports of French colonial administrators.

The written history of the Montagnards is considered to begin with the arrival of the French in the mid-1800's. Under French rule, the High Plateau became a Domaine de la Couronne directly under the authority of the Emperor. While Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) settlers were excluded from this area, the French were permitted to exploit the economic resources of the Domaine.

At the end of the 19th century, the French established an administrative system which divided the High Plateau into three provinces: Pleiku, Kontum, and Darlac, each with a French administrative unit, the province, was in turn divided into districts and cantons.[7] The village remained as the smallest administrative unit and retained its traditional leadership.[8] Under this administrative system, Montagnards were selected to serve as assistants to the provincial administrators and as officials at the district and canton levels.[9]

The Rengao are specifically mentioned only in the accounts of the French pacification of the highland area. To consolidate their influence in the highlands, the French in 1888 sent a soldier, David Mayrena, to Kontum. With the help of the Catholic mission in Kontum and Father J. B. Guerlach in particular, Mayrena was able to form a confederation of the Bahnar, Rengao, and Sedang. He proclaimed himself Marie I, titular King of the Sedang.[10] He then committed so many dishonest acts, such as the illegal sale of titles and lands, that he was exiled from French Indochina and died shortly thereafter.

In 1893, a treaty between the French and the Siamese marked the end of Siamese claims to territory east of the Mekong River; the highland area was then part of the French Annamite protectorate.[11] The French began to consolidate their authority in the area and attempted to contain the widespread intertribal warfare. In 1897, when the Jarai attacked a supply convoy en route to the mission at Kontum, Father Guerlach called upon the Bahnar to come to his assistance. They sent 1,200 men, the largest body of Montagnards ever to put themselves under the command of one man. The Jarai were defeated, and after peace was concluded, the missionaries arranged an alliance between several Bahnar subgroups and the Rengao.[12]

In 1923, the French Government issued a policy manifesto governing the Montagnards. It was agreed that the social structure of the tribes, whether patriarchy, matriarchy, or clan, would be respected by the government. Certain zones were to be closed off to alien settlement; the trading of goods—salt in particular—was to be regulated. The heads of the provinces were to codify tribal laws and collect data on tribal customs, superstitions, and folklore.

Settlement Patterns

Rengao villages are composed of the houses inhabited by family groups, a communal house located in the center of the village, cattle pens, chicken coops, and granaries for paddy (unhusked rice). Each village is enclosed by a fence, *jih,* designed chiefly to prevent the animals from wandering. Until recently, Rengao villages were fortified.

The Rengao family house is rectangular in shape, measuring 30 to 40 feet long and 10 to 15 feet wide.[13] The houses are built on pilings above the ground and are oriented in an east-west direction. The house varies in size according to the number of occupants. Woven bamboo screens divide the interior into compartments and sleeping quarters for the occupants. The parents and very young children sleep in the east wing; the left or west wing is reserved for the boys, or for servants if the family is wealthy; the center is generally reserved for the older daughters. On the western side additions to the house may be built for married sons and daughters. An annex also may be constructed to accommodate a second wife, if the husband takes one. Each house contains one or more hearths, square wooden frames filled with soil. Variations on this form of house may be devised for local reasons.

The communal house, *jong,* is in the center of each village and is distinguished by a very high roof shaped like an ax blade. The communal house serves as the sleeping quarters for boys from the age of puberty until marriage, a meeting room for the village elders, a reception hall for strangers, a marketplace, and a site for sacrifices.

Generally the village jong is set off from the family houses by an open space and is oriented in a northeast-southwest direction. Built above the ground on strong pilings (7 on the lateral sides and 2 on either end), the communal house is usually about 25 to 45 feet long and 12 to 15 feet wide.[14] In front of the entrance, usually on the southwest side, is a wide platform supported by small pilings. The floor of the interior is made of crushed bamboo planking supported by four large beams, designed to prevent lance thrusts from underneath. The sides of the communal house are made of braided bamboo, with the long sides slanted slightly outwards. On the long sides there are small windows which can be sealed shut by sliding panels.[15]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

There is considerable variation in physical appearance among the Rengao. Generally, however, they are short, about 5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 6 inches,[1] well proportioned, with smooth reddish-brown skin varying from light to dark, depending upon the amount of exposure to the elements. Both men and women wear their long black hair in a chignon. The face as well as the body is usually hairless, and beards are rare. However, beards and mustaches are greatly esteemed, and a few Rengao tribesmen manage to grow a sparse goatee or a thin mustache.[2]

Although neither men nor women tattoo themselves, they do scarify their chests at funerals of relatives.

Filing down the front teeth of boys and girls when they reach the age of puberty is no longer customary.[3]

Health

The Rengao have an average life expectancy of approximately 37 years.[4] Infant mortality is high, but the health of the tribespeople reaching adulthood may be described as good: early exposure to the many endemic diseases eliminates weak and sickly infants and children.

Young men and women put oil on their hair and comb it carefully; they also clean their teeth with a wooden splinter. As the tribespeople grow older they do not usually practice these grooming habits as regularly.

Religious beliefs, rather than considerations of sanitation, dictate the place and method for performing bodily functions. The living area is not allowed to become unclean, and there is a strict prohibition against contaminating the water supply.[5]

Many diseases in the Rengao area are carried by insects, including the anopheles mosquito, the rat flea, and the louse. Other diseases are caused by hookworms, poor sanitary conditons, and lack of sexual hygiene.[6]

Malaria is common in the area: many tribesmen have contracted it at least once during their lifetime. The two common types of malaria are the benign tertian malaria, which causes high fever with relapses, but usually is not fatal; and the malignant tertian malaria, which is fatal to both infants and adults.[7]

The three types of typhus present in the Republic of Vietnam are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reported to be especially prevalent among the tribes.[8]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the Rengao area.[9]

The Rengao believe that disease is caused by the activities of evil spirits and that cures are effected only by spirits. To cure disease, sorcerers called *bojau* determine the number of blood sacrifices necessary to appease the spirits. Once the proper sacrifices to the spirits are made, the Rengao believe that the sick person will recover. The bojau, who can be either a man or a woman, can prescribe herbal remedies, remove spells, and find lost *po'hngols*.[10] The Rengao believe the po'hngol, the essence or soul of man, resides just behind a person's forehead. While a person sleeps, the po'hngol presumably leaves the body to ask the spirits for advice. The human being receives this advice in the form of dreams. If the po'hngol cannot find the way back to its body, the body loses its strength and the person dies.

Endurance and Manual Dexterity

The Rengao can easily cover 40, and sometimes as much as 70 to 80, kilometers a day over difficult mountainous terrain carrying a 20 kilogram load. The tribesmen prefer to transport articles strapped to their backs, so that they may have free arm movement.[11]

The Rengao are skilled in the use of tools and can build a house using only a knife and a machete. They also engage in a variety of handicrafts, including the weaving of cloth and fibers.[12]

Psychological Characteristics

The psychological basis for the behavior of the Rengao is their involvement with the spirits and with each other as members of families and villages. Seemingly simple actions may involve complex family, religious, or traditional relationships and obligations. A decision may not be made immediately or independently by an individual tribesman. Only after he has consulted with members of his family, village elders, or a sorcerer will a Rengao make a decision. The sorcerer provides an indication of the attitude of the spirits to the proposed course of action.

When a Rengao makes a promise, he will carry it out and he expects others to do likewise.[13]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The social organization of the Rengao centers around the family and the village.* Authority rests in the hands of the father within the family, and the family name is passed along the male line. Kinship relations, however, are reckoned on both the male and female sides of the family. The extended family among the Rengao consists of those persons who are related by blood to each other on the maternal or paternal side. The nuclear family, or near family, consists of father, mother, and offspring.[1]

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Among the Rengao there exists a normal division of labor between the sexes. Men clear the land for planting, hunt, fish, build houses and tombs, and carry on trade. Women carry water, gather wood and edible roots and fruits from the forest, cook, husk the rice, make wine, weave, and do light work in the garden plots and ricefields.

Young children are raised permissively and allowed a great deal of freedom. Sometimes they are given small tasks to perform, such as looking after the domestic animals. Older children learn the family trade by assisting their parents.

Bachelors living in the communal house make tools, traps, nets, pipes, baskets, and bamboo storage tubes for water, salt, and tobacco. Although the bachelors make these articles, many are used exclusively by the women.[2]

Daily Routine

Women rise at dawn, open the chicken house, and prepare the first meal of the day after husking the rice. The men get up after the women and let the animals out of their pens. Generally the men approach their morning's work in a leisurely manner. The main meal of the day is eaten between 7 and 8 o'clock. The tribespeople do not like to miss this morning meal and will halt at the customary time to eat if they have made an early start on a trip.

After this meal, the members of the household disperse to their various tasks. At noon, a light, informal meal is eaten. In the evening, the family members gather together around the hearth for a third meal, and generally are in bed by 10 o'clock.[3]

---

* For discussion of the village, see "Political Organization," p. 632.

In the winter when the Rengao do not have to work in the fields, the routine varies. Much time is spent socializing with friends and neighbors, repairing tools, and occasionally hunting.[4]

Marriage

The Rengao rarely remain unmarried: it is considered unnatural to stay single.[5] There are several prerequisites for marriage: the young people should be 15 or 16 years of age, be able to cultivate their own field, have parental consent, and be members of different extended families. When a young man is old enough to cultivate his own field, he starts courting. Romantic love is an important factor in choosing a marriage partner.[6]

Marriage arrangements are handled by intermediaries, who act as witnesses to the marriage and offer prayers for its success. Marriage ceremonies involve a chicken sacrifice and a drinking ritual in which the couple sip wine from the same bamboo straw. The two families involved in the marriage ceremony contract a friendship alliance—a ceremonial or religious agreement—pledging that they will not harm one another. The expense of a marriage may be borne by either family or both, depending upon their wealth.[7]

It is customary during the first few years of marriage, usually until the birth of the first child, for the young couple to live alternately with the parents of the bride and then with the parents of the groom.[8]

Divorce and Second Marriage

Divorce, considered a very serious step, is permitted if reconciliation attempts directed by village elders have failed. Divorce may be initiated by either the husband or the wife but may not be granted if one party is in prison or absent.

Grounds for divorce include bigamy, repeated adultery, refusal to have sexual relations with the marriage partner, repeated brutality and sexual aberration, refusal to care for aged parents-in-law, and refusal to treat a venereal disease.[9]

Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth

Pregnant women are not allowed to perform certain tasks, such as digging and filling up holes, or tying knots.

Abortion is rarely practiced among the Rengao.[10]

An unmarried girl gives birth outside the village in order to prevent the spirits from bringing harm to the village. A married woman gives birth in the house near the family hearth in which a fire is kept burning. Delivery is aided by a midwife. The husband and young children may remain in the house, but adolescent boys of the household remain in the communal house from the time the woman begins labor pains until the baby is born.

Childhood

Newborn infants are immediately named, so as to drive away evil spirits who give the children names which would bring bad luck. Rengao names do not indicate family relationship or sex and traditionally are not duplicated within the village.[11]

Boys and girls play together without any restriction. At 5 or 6 years of age children take care of the poultry yard; when they are a few years older they look after the larger animals. The boys begin helping their fathers, and the girls their mothers.[12]

Traditionally, when children reached puberty, both boys and girls had their teeth filed down and stained black—a custom which has generally been abandoned.[13]

When boys have reached the age of puberty, they are considered able to help their fathers effectively, and they sleep in the communal house until marriage. During this period they continue to eat their meals in their parents' house and to sleep there when they are sick.[14]

Death and Burial

When a person dies, the tribespeople present at the time begin to weep and utter lamentations, while the rest of the villagers come to offer condolences. Formerly, tribesmen cut themselves and pounded their heads against the columns of the house in their grief, but this custom is dying out.

Burial occurs at nightfall about 20 or 30 hours after death. A funeral cortege accompanied by gong players takes the body to the burial place, where it is lowered into the grave, and jars, baskets, crossbows, or other articles are placed on it. During the burial, ceremonial animals are sacrificed and the next day all work is forbidden in the village. During the mourning period, which lasts from 6 months to 2 years, small sacrifices are made at the tomb. At the end of the mourning period, a religious ceremony held at the tomb marks the end of mourning, the abandonment of the grave, and the termination of the sacrifices for the deceased.[15]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Tribal Folklore

The tribal folklore of the Rengao contains stories of legendary history, love, and warfare, which are usually related in the evening after the day's work has been done. These stories often reflect ideals of physical beauty, describing men and women with smooth white skin, long limbs, and slender waists.

Dress

Generally, the men of the Rengao tribe wear a loincloth, and the women wear a skirt. In cool weather, men also wear a blanket, and the women put on a cotton sleeveless blouse. The cotton used for some of their clothes is purchased from the Jarai.

The Rengao wear strings of glass beads, silver bracelets, and silver collars. They have recently begun to wear some Western readymade clothes which they purchase from the ethnic Vietnamese.[1]

Folk Belief

Like other tribes of the Republic of Vietnam, the Rengao live in constant awareness, and often dread, of the various spirits they believe surround them. The tribesmen believe nothing happens by chance. Good luck, success, failure, dreams, and accidents are signs of the pleasure or anger of the spirits. Hence, much time is spent interpreting the meaning of these signs and in attempts to ward off misfortune, to placate angry spirits, and to keep the favor of friendly spirits.[2]

Many customs are associated with dreams. A bad dream, signaling the coming of misfortune or failure, is confided to some dirty or commonplace object, such as a doorway or a piece of firewood. In this manner, the tribesmen attempt to so disgust the spirit responsible for the dream that it will not exert its evil influence.[3]

Some omens and restrictions are associated with certain activities. For example, it is considered bad luck to meet a widow or a widower when going hunting. The tribesmen avoid working in the fields after dark for fear of the evil spirits.

The Rengao fear strangely shaped trees, or trees with unusually large limbs. They also fear the tiger—not only for the physical danger but also for a mysterious power supposedly associated with it.

Folk Beliefs Associated With Agriculture

The extent to which the Rengao live in a world of superstition is nowhere more evident than in their complicated agricultural routine. To insure the success of a crop, the clearing, burning, and sowing processes are accompanied by the most serious efforts to interpret the intentions of spirits and to create auspicious circumstances. During these rites, the activities of the tribespeople are restricted.[4] Before clearing the land, for example, the Rengao consults the birds. He sets out in the morning for a walk through the forest, on his back a sack of provisions—cooked rice, a whetstone, a billhook, a pipe, and a flint. About a hundred yards from the village, he begins calling the birds.[5] As he proceeds through the forest, he listens attentively to the sound of every bird and interprets the cries. Generally, a bird call on the left or from behind is a good omen; a call on the right is a bad one, possibly a sign of death. A call from the front is bad—it portends harm from falling trees and bamboo. No bird calls—silence—mean a skimpy harvest. Preferably, a bird is heard first on the left and slightly to the rear, then later again on the left; this "confirmation on the left" portends no accidents from billhooks or falling trees, no fever or sickness in the household, and a bountiful harvest. A confirmation is absolutely necessary before clearing new land, but is of less importance when clearing a plot for the second successive year.

To receive favorable bird calls may require many days in the woods. When confronted with bad omens, the cultivator returns home, takes off his pack, and smokes his pipe. Although he can repeat the process five or six times a day, punctuated by the smoking session, he is required to stay at home every third day. This continues until the birds deliver a favorable message. When appropriate signs fail to result, the tribesman may resort to another rite to speed the approval of the spirits.[6] He takes a branch of dead bamboo, lays it across the path and says with great determination: "I absolutely wish to clear this corner of the forest. Hurry up and sing! I have put this piece of bamboo here for you." [7]

During the rite of consulting the birds, the cultivator is restricted in other ways: He is forbidden to speak of marriage, send or receive merchandise, borrow, pay debts, replenish provisions from the granary, and speak to strangers or bring them into his house.

The actions of deer are also considered omens. If a deer crosses the tribesman's path from the right, things will go well; but if the deer crosses from the left, hard times are ahead.[8]

Having received the benediction of the spirits, the Rengao is at last ready to farm. The method of clearing the forest, called *muih*, involves clearing the underbrush with a billhook and cutting the trees down with an ax. The whole first day of clearing is devoted to certain rites to assure a successful harvest.[9] In one of these rites a piece of bamboo is split and a transverse piece set into the open fork. This is called *cho ha* or "open dog's mouth." The bamboo is placed with the open end away from the future field to frighten away any deer or birds which might interrupt the work. Next, the cultivator simulates the clearing work in miniature in a plot about 5 feet square. Several other rituals follow, including a game of heads-or-tails with pieces of bamboo, more consultation with the birds, and the planting of magic roots. There are numerous variations on these ceremonies among villages.

After the underbrush has been cleared, the second stage of clearing is begun with the sacrifice of a chicken and the offering of a prayer. The workers wash their feet in chicken blood and wine to calm the spirits of the trees and then begin to cut the trees.

Land clearing ends with the *chi long* or "gathering of the wood." The head of the household gathers part of the last tree cut and carries it home, where he sacrifices a chicken and anoints the wood, his ax, and his whetstone with the blood. When the new land is to be burned, the household head takes this piece of wood to the village forge, lights it, and blows the fire vigorously with the bellows—thus insuring a good fire on the new field.

At noon the field itself is set on fire. Holding green branches to keep the fire from spreading, men are stationed around the field. At possible danger points cho ha are set to confine the fire to the land to be planted. The head of the household lights his firebrand, throws salt on the trees which have been cut, offers another prayer of dedication to the spirits, and lights the field of fallen timber in 20 places.

At night, after the fires are lit, a drinking feast begins. The head of the household goes out on his doorstep, beats his drum, turns to his field, and calls to the spirit Abinos, who sows wheat and weeds: "Oh Father Abinos, do not sow seeds in our field. If you have to sow, sow this evening in order that your seeds will be burned tomorrow." [10]

While the field is burning, women are not permitted to weave or spin, because the fire may become thin, like cotton thread, and not burn the timber.

When the field is burned, the ashes and debris are gathered in piles and burned again. Then the field is ready for the planting of rice, banana trees, pineapple plants, or sugarcane.

Planting is accompanied by equally rigorous ceremonies and taboos. Seed for various fields must be kept in separate baskets.

If the supply of seed rice carried to the field is depleted before the field is completely sown, the supply cannot be replenished from the granary that same day. The *ding ho'noi,* a bamboo implement used by the women to cover the seed rice with earth, is considered sacred. It should not be knocked against wood or struck so that it sounds like a gong. Yang Xo'ri, the goddess of rice and the hearth, would hear the sounds and think she was about to receive a buffalo sacrifice; the deception would anger her.

During the first 2 days of sowing, eating acid fruits or drinking in the field is not permitted; the tribesmen believe that the animals might be tempted to eat the newly sown seed. Speaking to strangers on the road to the field is also prohibited. For the duration of the planting season, the cultivator may not stretch out while relaxing or sleeping. To do so might weaken or relax the rice and cause the crop to fail.[11] Children must refrain from playing with *pli keng,* a round fruit from a mimosa-like tree, and young girls must not beat on their *ding but,* a musical instrument made of a series of hollow tubes. Such sounds of levity are believed to be displeasing to the goddess Yang Xo'ri.[12]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Rengao are reportedly reserved and taciturn, especially before strangers, although they greet guests courteously. A representative of the village usually goes out to meet a guest and invites him to talk with other villagers in the communal house, where alcohol may be served.

Traditionally, when a stranger wished to settle in a Rengao village, he had to live in a house at the edge of the village, just inside the surrounding fence. Since a stranger's presence might anger the spirits and bring sickness or crop failure, the villagers watched for any signs that the spirits were displeased. After a stranger had lived in the village for 2 or 3 years with no evil results, he was allowed to settle nearer the center of the village.[13]

Visitors with beards appeal to the Rengao because beards fit the tribal ideal of masculine power. Fair skin and rosy cheeks also appeal to them.[14]

Eating and Drinking Customs

The basic food of the Rengao—rice—is husked every morning by the women. The tribespeople believe that dry rice is a sacred crop, and rice itself is sacred. Therefore, it is the custom to grind it the same day as it is eaten to show respect for Yang Xo'ri, the goddess of rice. Along with rice, the tribesmen eat a variety of vegetables and plants, including edible leaves, grasses, bamboo shoots, sweet potatoes, corn, eggplants, cucumbers, pumpkins, and mushrooms. Although animals such as buffaloes, pigs, and chickens are raised by the tribesmen primarily for sacrifices, after the offering has been made the remains are cooked and eaten. Pigs, chickens, and goats are sometimes slaughtered for food.

Techniques used to prepare food include roasting, boiling, steaming, and smoking. The tribesmen preserve meat, fish, and bamboo shoots for periods ranging from 3 to 6 months. Women do the cooking. At festivals men prepare certain meats for cooking, but the meat is cooked by the women.

Certain foods are prohibited. Specific food prohibitions vary from village to village. Pregnant women are subject to food prohibitions, but not their husbands; young children are not subject to any food prohibitions.

The ordinary beverage of the Rengao is water. At sacrifices, they drink a fermented rice beverage through long straws. Customarily, sacrificial wine is offered to all assembled guests in the order of their rank, age, and wealth.

Folk Beliefs Associated with Animals and Plants

The Rengao consider the tiger endowed with magical qualities. He is king of the earth, as thunder is king of the sky and the dragon is king of the waters. The Rengao believe that if ill words are spoken of the tiger, he will hear and never forget. The tiger can imitate the cry of any animal or change into any animal form: he may even speak the language of men.[15]

The wildcat and the civet, cousins of the tiger, are reputed to bring luck in hunting small game, while possession of an elephant offers protection against external enemies.[16]

The Rengao also attribute beneficial qualities to dreams about certain plants such as the bamboo *kram* the *jorri,* and the sycamore. Dreams of the bamboo kram are particularly revered because it has a life span of approximately 100 years.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The Rengao divide the universe into three worlds.[1] The first world is the earth, inhabited by living man and his soul. The second world, inhabited by the dead, is the world of dreams. The third world, heaven, is inhabited by great spirits; there events destined for the other two worlds occur first—6 months in advance.

Intercommunication exists between these worlds.[2] At night while the body sleeps, dreaming allows the soul to enter into the second world and converse with the dead and with spirits who may be visiting from the third world. The spirits of the third world can also visit the first world: they take the form of thunder, streams, mountains, and other natural objects; they collect offerings and receive invocations.

Principal Deities

The spirits inhabiting the third world are both masculine, *yang*, and feminine, *ya*, although the word yang is used to signify spirits in general. All spirits are married; thus when the yang are invoked during sacrifices, their wives are automatically included.[3]

Of all spirits, the most powerful and deadly is Bo Brok, the god of thunder, rain, and war. As the god of rain, he is invoked in agricultural sacrifices; as the god of war, he is appealed to before any battle.

The most beloved spirit is Yang Xo'ri, the goddess of rice and the hearth. Agrarian sacrifices are addressed to her by her priestess, who is the mistress of the house. Sickness occurring during fieldwork is attributed to her displeasure with some action of the tribespeople.

The Rengao believe innumerable lesser spirits exist, including Yang Mrai and Yang Ngut, who inhabit Mom Ray (Nang Mrai) and Kong Ngut, high mountains in the area. The Rengao also believe that the storms that occur from August to November are, in reality, battles between these spirits. Yang Mrai and Yang Ngut share with Bo Brok the prerogative of being honored as gods of war. Thus, when the Rengao celebrate a victory, these spirits are venerated and offered a sacrifice on behalf of the village.[4]

Sometimes objects such as jars, gongs, and drums are regarded as fetishes and considered to be the thrones of powerful spirits. These objects are considered valuable only after a villager's dream reveals that they are inhabited by a potent spirit.[5] Such jars are usually not touched except at ceremonies, when they are filled with sacrificial wine.

Principal Religious Holidays and Rituals

As the Rengao are basically an agricultural people, their principal religious rites and sacrifices center upon such agricultural activities as clearing fields, sowing, and harvesting crops.*

One ritual, the "Rite of Sprinkling the Rice," is practiced by the northern villages at the time of sowing and by the southern villages as a distinct ceremony after the first hoeing. In this ceremony a small basket, which contains a smaller basket filled with heavy gravel or earth, is suspended from the fork of a bamboo "open dog's mouth." The farmer and his wife recite: "Txu! I hang this sand in order that my rice will not compress itself more than the gravel and sand, and that its kernel may be as heavy as the sand and gravel."[6] A chicken and a pig are killed by having their throats cut. The farmer takes the chicken by its legs, drags it in a circle five times over the rim of a wine jar, and asks the chicken to predict the success of his crop. He then hurls the chicken before him. For a good omen the head of the chicken should fall with its beak facing him and its neck straight, lying neither too much to one side nor the other. This ceremony is repeated until a favorable response is obtained. Then the chicken is plucked and the pig is skinned for a feast which is held in the home.

There are various sacrifices to the spirits involving the liver of an animal and a jar of wine. Except for rice sacrifices, when only rice wine may be used, the wine may be made from any grain—millet, sorghum, or corn. The spirits are invited to partake of the food and drink, followed by the principal participants and the other villagers.[7]

Missionary Contacts With the Rengao

In 1883 Father Guerlach of the Kontum mission estimated that there were 1,500 Bahnar and Rengao who had been converted to Christianity.[8] By providing medical aid to the tribespeople, the Kontum mission was able to further its missionary efforts. For example, in 1893 the mission procured vaccine from Saigon to halt a smallpox epidemic in several villages.[9]

The Kontum mission, with the Christian tribespeople as a nucleus, was able to form a defensive alliance between the Rengao and Bahnar in response to Jarai aggression in the late 1890's.* [10]

---

* See "Folk Beliefs Associated With Agriculture," p. 621.

Religious Practitioners

There is no hierarchy of priests who conduct sacrifices for the Rengao to the spirits. Rather, the tribesmen deal directly with the spirits, conducting the sacrifices and offering appropriate prayers.[11] For example, a sacrifice on behalf of a village is conducted by the elders, and a sacrifice on behalf of a household is conducted by the man and woman who head the household. Sacrifices involving individuals are conducted by the individual concerned.

It is only with respect to curing disease that the tribesmen resort to practitioners called bojau who determine the amount of blood sacrifices necessary to appease the spirits, prescribe herbal remedies, and find lost po'hngols.†

---

* See "Factual History," pp. 3–4.

† See "Health," pp. 6–7.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Rengao have a subsistence economy based upon agriculture and supplemented by hunting, fishing, and limited trade. The village is the basic economic unit.

The primary occupation of the Rengao is the cultivation of upland rice by the slash-and-burn technique. A plot of land is farmed for a given period of time and then, when its fertility declines, is left fallow while its cultivators move to another field. A field is usually farmed for 3 or 4 successive years before being abandoned; several years later the tribesmen may return to recultivate the overgrown plot. These fields are not necessarily near the village; they may be located some distance away due to the exhaustion of nearby soils.

In choosing a plot of land for cultivation, the Rengao try to stay close to streams and near other cultivated land. They avoid places where anyone has been killed because they believe To'riang, the spirit of violent death, resides there. New sites for *rays* (fields cultivated by the slash-and-burn method) are chosen by the headman, usually together with village elders and a sorcerer, acting according to rules and interpretation of traditional signs.

Early in the dry season or late in the wet season the forest is cleared. First the brush is cleared with a billhook, then the trees are felled by ax, leaving stumps of 1 to 2 feet. The cut vegetation is allowed to dry and is burned about a month before the next heavy rains. The field is burned under prescribed conditions to prevent the fire from spreading and with rituals to placate the spirits. When the field has cooled, the family clears the debris, leaving only boulders and stumps. Then, before sowing, the charred debris is gathered in small piles and burned again. The layer of fine ash is subsequently washed into the soil by the rains.

First, banana trees, pineapple bushes, sugarcane, and other plants are planted, preferably along a path and around the hut constructed in the fields as a resthouse for the workers.

When the first rains loosen the soil, the Rengao begin planting. The fields are weeded, usually by the women, just before or during the planting and once again during the growing season. Rice sowing begins in May and continues to the middle of July. The men make holes for the seed rice with a long dibble stick, *xo'rang*. The women follow with seed sacks; they place the seeds in the holes, tamping the earth over the hole with the ding ho'noi, the sacred piece of bamboo.

Upland rice is the most important and the preferred crop. Secondary crops, such as gourds, cucumbers, beans, and sorghum, are planted in alternate rows with the rice. Sesame and cotton are sown in special sections of the fields.

In addition to the food obtained from farming, the women gather edible roots, shoots, leaves, fruits, tubers, and herbs. With the help of dogs, the women catch lizards, rats, snakes, squirrels, and birds. Pitch gathered from trees is used as a fuel for illumination.

The Rengao like fresh meat and soups made from the entrails and blood of animals. Formerly they depended much more upon hunting than they do at present. Many of the Rengao areas originally abounded in game but are now nearly barren. Only Rengao men engage in the hunt; most tribesmen can track and stalk game with great skill.

The Rengao raise buffaloes primarily for sacrificial purposes. Pigs, chickens, and goats are also raised for use as blood sacrifices, especially for agricultural ceremonies; however, they are occasionally slaughtered for food. Usually the children are given the responsibility of caring for the livestock.

The Rengao also fish. A method frequently used involves drugging the marine life by placing a narcotic in the water. The entire village participates in this type of fishing. Another method, catching and scooping up the fish in baskets, is used only by the women and children.[1]

Special Arts and Skills

The Rengao engage in several crafts, skillfully using simple, even crude, tools. Basketmaking is the chief craft and is carried on to some degree in every village. The well-designed baskets are made of very thin strips of rattan.

Bamboo, rattan, palm leaves, and wood are made into matting, light walls, traps, pipes, nets, weapons, and containers for water, salt, and tobacco. Bachelors in the communal house, joined by other male adults, make many objects, but some things, such as pestles and certain fishing baskets, are made only by the women. Only the men may build tombs, coffins, and boats. Some Rengao are skilled blacksmiths.[2]

The women weave coarse, colorful cloth of cotton, ordinarily using four sets of threads shuttled through a light weaving loom simply constructed from several pieces of wood. The fiber providing the thread for the weaving is seldom grown locally but is obtained in trade from the ethnic Vietnamese.

Many of these local handicrafts are declining because of the availability of imports.[3]

Exchange System and Trade

Although they have recently become acquainted with money, the Rengao still depend heavily upon a barter system of exchange. Prices are often fixed in terms of buffaloes, jars, gongs, weapons, clothes, and other objects.

The Rengao actively barter with neighboring tribes and with the ethnic Vietnamese. The Rengao trade various animal and forest products, especially those supposed to be aphrodisiacs, for salt, metal goods, cotton, and highly prized gongs and jars.[4]

Property System

Individual property among the Rengao includes goods such as weapons, implements, traps, kitchen utensils, jars, gongs, houses, and granaries. Livestock, poultry, game, fish, honey, and crops planted on the land as distinct from the land itself, are also privately owned.[5]

Each spouse in a marriage retains title to his personal goods and their use. The products of the joint effort of the married couple are considered to be common property.

Upon the death of a husband or wife, his or her personal property is used to defray the cost of burial and the closing of the tomb. The remainder is divided first among any descendants and second among blood relatives who are the same age or older than the deceased.[6]

The common property is also apportioned when a spouse dies. One half of all the goods comprising the common property goes to the surviving spouse. The other half is apportioned primarily among descendants and secondarily among relatives the same age or older.

Land ownership is reckoned by *toring* associations, an arrangement under which the territory of several villages is collectively administered. A toring controls the farming, hunting, and fishing rights of the villages within its territorial boundaries; however, the toring does not serve as a political unit. Outsiders, whether Rengao or not, are expected to obtain the approval of the elders of the association before engaging in any activity governed by the toring.

Although land is not owned by individuals or families, cultivators of a particular field—whether the field is currently in use or fallow—are recognized by the villagers to have a preemptive right to that specific area. These rights are well known and respected within the toring association.[7]

Distribution of Wealth

Although money is becoming increasingly important to the tribesmen, wealth is usually measured in terms of buffaloes, gongs, and jars. Most villages have several wealthy families who constitute the sociopolitical elite. The wealthy may employ servants and agricultural workers. Servants receive food, housing, clothing, and a small sum of money, and agricultural workers are paid a portion of the harvest.[8]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The village is the highest level of political organization among the Rengao. Although they were once a part of an informal Bahnar union, that union disintegrated during the latter part of the 19th century and the Rengao now have no tribal political organization.

A Rengao village is best described as a group of extended families, having common interests and often interrelated. Beyond the village, a loose association among several villages, called the toring, appears to function largely for administration of fishing, hunting, and farming rights, with no apparent political implication.

Violations of village customs, conflicts between families, and conflicts between villages are handled by a village council, chosen by the male household heads. The council is headed by a *kra,* or village headman, who represents the elders in affairs outside the village. The position of kra is normally handed down from father to son with the consent of elders and villagers.

The traditional responsibilities of the council include the administration of the village, the protection of its inhabitants, and the organization of village rituals.[1] The authority of the council is limited within the village by the power and influence of the eldest males of the various extended families.

Representatives of the Vietnamese Government supervise relations between villages; one representative works with a group of seven or eight tribal villages. The villages in turn are represented by their village headmen.

Legal System

The traditional tribal laws, expressed by taboos and sanctions, are known and respected by all tribal members. There is a strong communal spirit in each village; the sanction of the community acts as a deterrent to violators. Disputes and punishments for transgressions are the concern of both family and village.

Under the French, a special system of courts was established on the village, district, and provincial levels to adjudicate matters concerning the various tribal groups. In the village, a village court decided the sentences. These sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three district court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and these members handled only tribal matters. The district court officials selected a president to preside over the district court, which met in the house of the district chief.[2]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved on the village level were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on traditional tribal law and customs.[3] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and tribespeople were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for tribal practices. This was part of Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribespeople politically into the Republic of Vietnam. In addition, the Vietnamese have long considered tribal justice harsh.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[4]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[5] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. However, if settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[6]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court, "all minor offenses," and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[7]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[8]

Subversive Influences

The main objective of Viet Cong subversive activity in the Rengao area is to divert tribal support and allegiance from the Vietnamese Government to the Viet Cong. Another important Viet Cong objective is to maintain supply lines through the Rengao area.

Viet Cong subversive elements generally infiltrate a village and attempt to win the confidence of the whole village or its key individuals. The Viet Cong use a thorough knowledge of tribal customs to further their aims.

Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong proceed with an intense propaganda program directed against the Vietnamese Government. Tribesmen are recruited and trained for various support or combat missions with the Viet Cong.

When propaganda and cajolery are ineffective, the Viet Cong may resort to extortion and terror. The Viet Cong often coerce the Rengao into refusing to cooperate with the Vietnamese Government, or the villagers may be compelled to give the Viet Cong active support as laborers and sources of materiel.[9]

The Rengao are subject to varying degrees of pressure and influence from several countries.[10] North Vietnam has long been attempting to gain the support of the tribesmen in insurgent activity against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Communist China and other Communist-bloc countries that may be supplying men, materiel, and training to the Viet Cong also have some effect upon the Rengao.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

In the Rengao area the principal means of disseminating information is by word of mouth.

No information is available concerning the number of radios and the degree of Rengao familiarity with them. However, radios are probably no less rare among the Rengao than among other tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam. Any radios in the Rengao area could pick up broadcasts from Saigon and provincial radio stations. Where feasible, short movies covering simple subjects and using the Rengao language might be an effective means to communicate with the Rengao.

Written communication might have some effect. Although the Rengao have no written language, some tribesmen can read Bahnar, French, or Vietnamese and could pass on information to the other tribesmen. Information concerning the use of printed materials was not available at this writing.

Information themes planned for the Rengao should be oriented to the principle of improving village conditions and should be couched in terms familiar to the tribesmen. If the tribesmen believe that a particular program is not explicitly for their benefit, they will not cooperate. The control of disease, the improvement of agriculture, community development, and protection against Viet Cong harassment are possible themes for information programs.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Rengao religious, social, and cultural traditions. All initial contacts should be made only with the tribal elders because of the Rengao political structure. It is essential to psychologically prepare the Rengao to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to result, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village-oriented, the Rengao respond favorably to ideas for change when they are presented in terms of community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained: the Rengao resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Civic action programs by the Vietnamese Government have included the resettlement of the Rengao into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, and education of the Rengao tribesmen. These programs have not been wholly successful because of the isolation of the tribesmen, their disinclination to change their traditional ways, and interference by the Viet Cong.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in planning and implementing projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Rengao encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Introduction of techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
    e. Insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water-supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    a. Provide basic literacy training.
    b. Provide rudimentary vocational training.
    c. Present information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.
    d. Provide basic citizenship training, particularly with reference to common Republic of Vietnam and United States objectives, policies, and programs.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

Reportedly, the Rengao are skilled and effective fighters both in offensive and defensive combat. The Rengao are capable scouts, trackers, and guides; if given intensive modern training, support, and leadership, they could become exceptionally effective in jungle warfare.

Hostile Activity Toward the Tribe

Proximity to the city of Kontum, an important highland population center, makes the Rengao territory militarily significant. In the early 1960's, the region was crossed by Viet Cong supply routes and served as a refuge area for Viet Cong military units.

Under threat of terror and reprisals, the Rengao have been forced to give the Viet Cong support in the form of food, finances, and labor. When the tactics of subversion and propaganda do not result in gaining the support of the tribespeople, the Viet Cong resort to murder and other brutalities.

Organization for Defense

By tradition, a Rengao village is organized against surprise attack. The communal house in the center of the village, normally used as the sleeping quarters for bachelors, serves as a stronghold for defense in terms of warfare conducted with lances, knives, and crossbows. Formerly villages were surrounded by stockades, but in recent years these have been replaced by fences. Due to increased military activity within the area, more secure perimeter defenses may now be employed.

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

The traditional Rengao weapons are spears, swords, and crossbows, with poisoned arrows. The Rengao are familiar with the use of traps, pits, and spiked foot traps (concealed sharpened sticks). Some Rengao who have had military training from the French, Vietnamese, and Americans know how to use modern weapons.

Their relatively small physical size makes Rengao tribesmen more comfortable and adept with small, light weapons. They can handle larger weapons that are quickly assembled and disassembled. Traditionally the Rengao take good care of their weapons: if they can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, they will generally use it well.

The Rengao are less proficient in the use of the more sophisticated weapons such as mortars, explosives, and mines, because of difficulty in understanding the theoretical and technical aspects of timing and trajectory.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Rengao learn more readily from actual demonstration of techniques and procedures than they do from standard classroom methods. Tribesmen with military service under the French are an asset in training the younger tribesmen.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE RENGAO

Every action of the Rengao tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Rengao may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Rengao are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Rengao village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Rengao. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Rengao tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. No immediate, important decision should be asked of a Rengao. An opportunity for family consultation should always be provided: if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
7. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive some of the credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Rengao should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one should eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a Rengao house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Rengao ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Rengao house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Rengao women.
8. Outsiders should help the Rengao learn new techniques, methods, and concepts; however, teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Rengao believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.
3. Do not mock Rengao religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Rengao life. Pay particular attention to Rengao beliefs concerning bird omens.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Rengao property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should

avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.

2. When trading with the Rengao, outsiders should always allow time for family conferences, as the individual is obliged by tradition to consult his family before selling anything.
3. Learn simple phrases in the Rengao language. A desire to learn and speak their language makes a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Rengao are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Rengao areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Henri Maître, *Les Jungles moi* (Paris: Émile Larose, 1912), p. 411; Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), pp. 393–96.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), p. 13.
4. Paul P. Guilleminet, "Remarques suggerées par des rapprochements faits entre l'article du Capitaine Maurice relatif à trois fêtes agraires rhade et celui du Père Kemlin sur les rites agraires des Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), p. 209; Phillips, *op. cit.,* p. 13.
5. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition, 1965), maps of tribal areas; R. P. J. E. Kemlin, "Rites agraires des Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* IX (1909), p. 493.
6. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 19–20 and Figure 14.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, August 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]
10. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.,* map of tribal areas.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Frank M. LeBar, *et al., Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 94.
2. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
3. LeBar *et al., op. cit.,* p. 94; Guilleminet, "Remarques," *op. cit.,* pp. 209, 394; Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), pp. 57, 61, 66; Maître, *op. cit.;* pp. 411–12; George Devereux, "Functioning Units in Ha(rh)ndea(ng) Society," *Primitive Man,* X (1937), p. 1.
4. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 4.

5. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1046–47.
6. R. P. J. E. Kemlin, "Alliances chez les Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XVII (1917), p. 56.
7. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), p. 7.
8. *Ibid.,* pp. 28–29.
9. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 15–16.
10. Bourotte, *op. cit.,* p. 78.
11. Darby, *op. cit.,* p. 83.
12. Bourotte, *op. cit.,* p. 77.
13. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.,* pp. 456–59.
14. H. Parmentier, "La Maison commune du village bahnar de Kombraith," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), p. 223; Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.,* pp. 500–501.
15. *Ibid.*

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Notion de beauté du corps humain chez les Bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), pp. 251–52; Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.,* pp. 402–407.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.,* pp. 404–405.
4. Rev. David Frazier, Interview, May 1965. [Missionary; 5 years of service in Vietnam, mostly among the Bahnar.]
5. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.,* pp. 411–12.
6. Darby, *op. cit.,* pp. 109–31.
7. *Ibid.,* pp. 110–14.
8. *Ibid.,* pp. 114–16.
9. *Ibid.,* pp. 116–18.
10. Paul P. Guilleminet, "Recherches sur les croyances des tribus du haut-pays d'Annam, les Barnar du Kontum et leurs voisins, les magiciens," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), p. 23.
11. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.,* p. 403.
12. Frazier, *op. cit.*
13. *Ibid.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.,* pp. 486—95.
2. *Ibid.,* pp. 470–71.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 471.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.,* p. 483.
6. *Ibid.,* p. 459.
7. *Ibid.,* pp. 460–61.
8. *Ibid.,* pp. 456–57.
9. *Ibid.,* pp. 473–75.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 462.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 464.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 404–405.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 476–77.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, pp. 405–406; Frazier, *op. cit.*
2. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 434.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 435–36.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 434–37.
5. Kemlin, "Rites agraires," *op. cit.*, p. 497.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 498.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 497–98.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 507.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 493–518.
13. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 502.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 404.
15. Kemlin, "Alliances," *op. cit.*, p. 89.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

VI. RELIGION

1. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, pp. 398–99; Kemlin, "Alliances," *op. cit.*, p. 60.
2. Kemlin, "Alliances," *op. cit.*, p. 60.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
6. Kemlin, "Rites agraires," *op. cit.*, p. 515.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 518.
8. Bourotte, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
9. R. P. J. B. Guerlach, "Chez les sauvages de la Cochinchine orientale: Bahnar, Reungao, Sedang," *Missions Catholiques*, XXVI (1894), pp. 219–20.
10. Bourotte, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
11. Guilleminet, "Recherches sur les croyances des tribus," *op. cit.*, p. 23; Kemlin, "Rites agraires," *op. cit.*, pp 493—522.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 465.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 521–23.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 522.
4. Kopf, *op. cit.*
5. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, pp. 471–73.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Gerald C. Hickey, "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965).
8. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 522.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Hickey, "Montagnard Agriculture," *op. cit.*
2. Donoghue, Whitney, and Ishina, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–70.
3. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.
4. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.
10. Frederic Wickert, "The Tribesmen," in *Viet-nam: The First Five Years*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959), pp. 126–35; Bernard B. Fall, "Commentary on 'The Tribesmen'," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm, pp. 135–40.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

No footnotes.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE RENGAO

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Claeys, Jean Y. *À Propos d'un sacrifice ritual chez les Katu, "Chasseurs de sang" a Ben-Giang, (Quang-nam).* Hanoi: Imprimeurs d'Extrême-Orient, 1939.

Clifford, Hugh. "The King of the Sedangs," *Asia,* XXVI (1926), 854–58, 915–20.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina.* (JPRS/CSO: 6757–DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie,* Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Devereux, George. "Functioning Units in Ha(rh)ndea(ng) Society," *Primitive Man,* X (1937), 1–8.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Fall, Bernard B. "Commentary on 'The Tribesmen'," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 135–40.

Frazier, Rev. David. Interview. May 1965 [Missionary; 5 years of service in Vietnam, mostly among the Bahnar.]

Guerlach, R. P. J. B. "Chez les sauvages Bahnar-Reungao (Cochinchine orientale)," *Annales de la Société des Missions Étrangères* (Paris), XXX (1902), 289–99.

———. "Chez les sauvages de la Cochinchine orientale: Bahnar, Reungao, Sedang," *Missions Catholiques,* XXVI (1894), 9–12, 21–24, 46–48, 70–71, 81–83, 94–96, 107–108, 115–18, 132–34, 140–44, 157–60, 169–72, 182–83, 193–95, 206–208, 219–20, 241–43.

Guilleminet, Paul P. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum.* Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

———. "La Notion de beauté du corps humain chez les Bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 251–56.

———. "Recherches sur les croyances des tribus du haut-pays d'Annam, les Bahnar du Kontum et leurs voisins, les magiciens," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 9–33.

Guilleminet, Paul P. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 393–561.

———. "Remarques suggerées par des rapprochements faits entre l'article du Capitaine Maurice relatif à trois fêtes agraires rhade et celui du Père Kemlin sur les rites agraires des Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 209–12.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. "Comments on Y Bham's Address — 15 March 1965." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, March 24, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARDA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

Huong, Moc [Lam Ngoc Trang]. *Customs and Mores of the Bahnar People.* Hue: U.S. Department of the Army Translation I–1330, 2198515, 1960.

Kemlin, R. P. J. E. "Alliances chez les Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XVII (1917), 1–119.

———. "Rites agraires des Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, IX (1909), 493–522; X (1910), 131–58.

———. "Les Songes et leur interpretation chez les Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, X (1910), 507–38.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. August 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

———. Notes on Condominas Lecture Given in 1962.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al.* *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

"Légende Rongao: la tortue et le singe," *Revue Indochinoise* (March 1907), 360–66.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

———. *Les Regions moi du Sud-Indo-Chinois.* Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909.

Maspéro, Henri. "Moeurs et coutumes des populations sauvages," *Un Empire colonial français: L'Indochine.* Edited by Georges Maspéro. Paris: G. Van Oest, 1929.

Mestre, E. "Le Rite d'inauguration de la vente du paddy chez les Moi reungao," *(Annuaire 1934–1935 de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Religieuses).* Melun, France: Imprimerie Administrative, 1935, 3–15.

Parmentier, H. "La Maison commune du village bahnar de Kombraith," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 223–24.

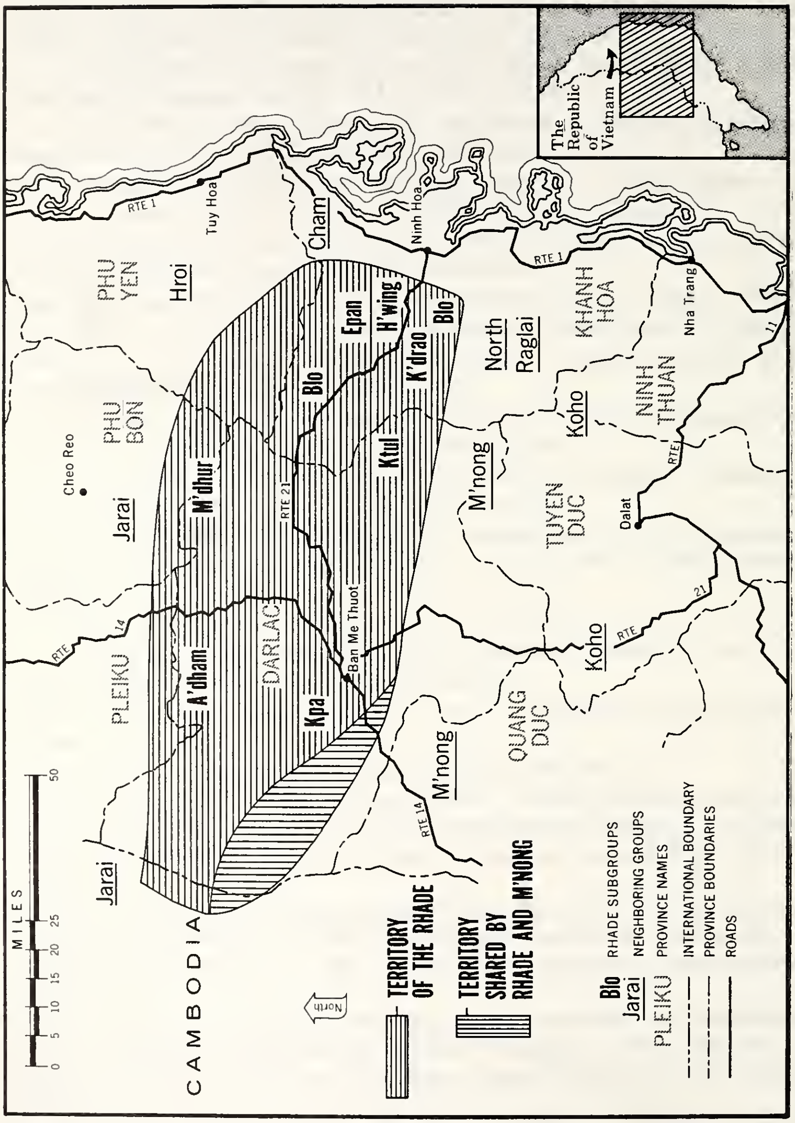
Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), 13.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition, 1965.

Verneau, R. "Les Âges de la pierre et du bronze dans les pays des Bahnars, des Sedangs, des Reungaos et dans l'arrondissement de Bienhoa," *Mission Pavie, Études Diverses,* III (1904), 27–40.

Wickert, Frederic. "The Tribesmen," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, (1959), 126–35.


CAMBODIA
MILES
0
5
10
15
20
25
50
North
Jarai
PLEIKU
RTE 14
A'dham
DARLAC
Kpa
Ban Me Thuot
M'nong
RTE 14
QUANG DUC
Koho
RTE 21
Jarai
Cheo Reo
PHU BON
M'dhur
RTE 21
Blo
Ktul
M'nong
TUYEN DUC
Dalat
RTE
Koho
NINH THUAN
PHU YEN
Hroi
Tuy Hoa
RTE 1
Cham
Epan
H'wing
K'drao
Blo
Ninh Hoa
North Raglai
KHANH HOA
RTE 1
Nha Trang
11
The Republic of Vietnam
TERRITORY OF THE RHADE
TERRITORY SHARED BY RHADE AND M'NONG
Blo RHADE SUBGROUPS
Jarai NEIGHBORING GROUPS
PLEIKU PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS

The Rhade Subgroups

CHAPTER 16. THE RHADE

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

For decades the Rhade tribe has been considered the most important and most strategically located of the Montagnard tribes in the Republic of Vietnam. The Rhade is one of the largest tribes, numbering between 100,000 and 120,000 and inhabiting an extensive strip of the Darlac Plateau.

The Rhade language is of Malayo-Polynesian origin and is related to the languages of the Jarai and the Raglai. The tribe is a matrilineal group, living in village units that form the political organization of the tribe. The Rhade are a very religious people, living in constant interaction with the animistic spirits that surround them.

Name and Size of Group

The name Rhade is the French variation of the Montagnard name, Ete. Some authorities believe that *ete* (or *ede)* designates a type of bamboo and that the name of the Rhade would therefore be "those who live in the bamboo." [1] The Vietnamese use this Montagnard term, spelling at E-De, while Rhade is the name commonly used by the French and Americans. Rhade is the usual spelling, though some investigators spell it Raday. Some claim the word *rhade* is a corruption of the expression *anak Ae Adie,* which means "Children of the Master of the Sky," or "Children of God."

Anthropologists generally agree on the following Rhade subgroups: Rhade Kpa, Rhade M'dhur, Rhade A'dham, Ktul, Epan, Blo, K'drao, and H'wing.[2] Although some sources consider the Bih a Rhade subgroup, most state that the Bih may originally have been a Rhade group, but they diverged and joined the M'nong tribe.[3]

Although no accurate records are available indicating the exact number of Rhade, estimates range from 100,000 to 120,000 [4] with roughly 68,000 of this total registered in Ban Me Thuot. Precise figures are difficult to obtain because many of the Rhade do not bother to declare births and deaths in their families and a few, mostly those in the army, have legally become Vietnamese.

Location

The Rhade tribe is centered around the village of Ban Me Thuot and can be found throughout Darlac Province. Rhade groups also inhabit the northwestern quarter of Khanh Hoa Province, the southwestern corner of Phu Yen, and the southern border areas of Phu Bon and Pleiku Provinces. There are also scattered groups of Rhade in Cambodia near the Darlac border.

The Rhade Kpa, around the Ban Me Thuot area, have more contact with the Vietnamese than most of the other subgroups because Ban Me Thuot is the center of plantations operated by the Vietnamese. To the south and southwest are several M'nong subgroups. North of the Kpa are the Rhade A'dham subgroups. The A'dham are located on the southern edge of Jarai territory. East of the A'dham and the Kpa are the M'dhur and Ktul (or Klul) subgroups. These people inhabit a north-south strip from the edge of Jarai territory to the southern portion of Darlac Province where their neighbors are various M'nong groups, primarily the M'nong Cil. East of the Ktul area is another north-south strip inhabited by Rhade subgroups; from north to south, the Blo, Epan, H'wing, K'drao, and another group of the Blo. The Jarai, the Hroi, and a few Cham border the northernmost Blo and the Epan. The southernmost Blo border on the M'nong Cil area to the southwest and Raglai territory to the south. The Vietnamese touch the eastern edge of all these areas. See the map for a clear picture of subgroup locations.

Terrain Analysis

The eastern part of the Darlac Plateau is about 1,500 feet above sea level. The Ayounh River, a tributary of the Song Ba, drains its extreme eastern part. The rest of the plateau is drained by numerous tributaries of the Srepok River, flowing westward into Cambodia. The plateau is separated from the coastal plains by the mountains of Binh Dinh.

The climate of the Darlac Plateau is influenced by both the summer (April through October) and winter (mid-September to March) monsoon winds. In the summer, these winds come from the southwest and in the winter, from the northeast. Agriculture in the area is greatly dependent upon the rain brought by the summer monsoons. The winter monsoons also provide precipitation, though this is quite unreliable. The plateau region receives from 50 to 150 inches of precipitation annually, the heaviest rains falling in July and August.[5] Temperatures in the plateau are lower than in the coastal regions, differing by as much as 15° during the winter months.[6]

The soft, powdery, basalt-based, red earth of the Darlac Plateau once supported forests. Now, as a result of the slash-and-burn agricultural processes, only small wooded areas remain on granitic pegs (Dhu-Ebung near Ban Me Thuot) and along the peripheral chains of hills. Otherwise, the whole region is a savanna-type area of grassy plains and bamboo.[7]

Tranh (Imperata cylindrica), known as *lalang* or *alang-alang* in Malaya, makes up a large part of the undergrowth. It is a tall, coarse grass that turns yellow when dry. When young, it is good for grazing, but it is principally used as thatches for houses.

Ban Me Thuot, located in the main area of Rhade concentration, is on Route 14 which connects it with Pleiku to the north and Duc Lap (Quang Duc Province) to the south. Ban Me Thuot is connected with the coast (Ninh Hoa in Khanh Hoa Province) by Route 21 and with Dalat by Route 20. Two airfields near Ban Me Thuot—an all-weather field north of the village and a seasonal field to the southeast—provide air accessibility to the region.

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

According to their language and culture, the Rhade may be grouped with the Malayó-Polynesian peoples of the East Indies. The Rhade language is like those of people on islands as widely separated as the Philippines and Sumatra, as well as similar to those of the highland tribes of the Raglai and the Jarai.

Opinions vary about the geographic origin of the Malayó-Polynesian peoples in the Indochinese Peninsula. Some authorities believe that they migrated from the Indonesian area to Indochina. Others think they originated in the Indian subcontinent, migrated eastward, and then spread from the Indochinese peninsula to Indonesia and the islands of the Pacific. Still another conjecture is that the tribes migrated to Indochina from China proper. The latter theory holds that the Polynesians were originally settled in the Chinese coastal region of Kwangtung before sailing south and east.

Language

The Rhade language is related to the Malayó-Polynesian language group. Malayó-Polynesian is one of the most widespread linguistic families in the world and is spoken in the Indochinese Peninsula, the Malayan Peninsula, and the Philippines. The Rhade language is also closely related to the Cham language. The many points of similarity in the language used by the Rhade and languages used by tribal groups in the Philippines, Borneo, and Indonesia seem to support the idea that the Rhade once lived nearer the coast and that pressures from other ethnic groups gradually pushed them onto the Darlac Plateau.[1]

The Rhade language is almost nontonal. Words are of one syllable and have many explosive sounds with brief vowel sounds caused by the glottal stop. Each vowel has a long and short form. Consonants are not aspirated unless followed by an "h." The final "h" in a word is always pronounced. The "r" is often rolled.[2]

The Rhade vocabulary has few words that can be applied to modern or Western objects. However, it is very rich in words for things or subjects familiar to the Rhade. For example, it has many words for "bamboo," each word describing differences in bamboo according to size, type, and use.[3]

There is a phonetically written form of Rhade, but few, except missionaries, use it. This written language, developed by Sabatier, a French administrator in the area, has existed for roughly 50 years.[4]

The Rhade like to relate a legend to explain their lack of a written language prior to that developed by Sabatier. Ida, their creator, invited them to come and get a language. Other peoples brought pieces of weed upon which to write their language, but the Rhade, hoping to make a good impression on Ida, brought a buffalo skin instead, believing the skin to be more sophisticated and expensive. On the return journey from the meeting with Ida, a dog ran off with the buffalo skin thereby taking the only copy of their written language.[5]

Although the dialects of the Rhade subgroups are basically similar, slight differences indicate the speaker's origin.[6] Rhade Kpa is quite different from the other Rhade dialects, but it is understood and used by most people in the general area, including neighboring M'nong tribesmen. Some Rhade understand the language of the neighboring Jarai.

Although few Rhade speak French, Vietnamese, or English some reportedly know enough English to serve as interpreters.[7] Rhade interpreters used by outside personnel have generally received their English training from the Protestant Far East Mission Society.

Although some sources report that geometrical signs are used to communicate warnings to travelers, a recent visitor to the area reported he had seen no indication that such signs were a common means of communication between groups of different dialects.[8]

Legendary History

The legendary accounts of the Rhade reveal assumptions that the Rhade have held throughout the ages. These legends supply interesting parallels with traditional Western concepts about the origin of the world and reveal the degree of sophistication among the Rhade.

Their legendary history, contained in five epic poems, lists five epochs. The five epics yield valuable insights into the Rhade. They believe that they are the oldest race on earth and that they are the only human beings who have preserved, through oral tradition, contact with forebears who lived in prehistoric times. The Rhade legend of H'Bia Ngo describes a creature which has been identified as a prehistoric mammoth.

The last Rhade epoch includes the period of recorded history. The Rhade left their original home in the Darlac Plateau in an earlier epoch and by the beginning of the last epoch were living in the islands southeast of Indochina. The Rhade never forgot their original home, however, and they sailed for the Indochinese coast where they disembarked. Not finding enough food there, they moved on to the Darlac Plateau where they have remained ever since.[9]

Factual History

In view of the limited and fragmentary data available, it is extremely difficult to present a comprehensive historical account of individual Montagnard tribes. Consequently, the recorded history of the Rhade tribe has to be treated in most instances as an integral part of overall Montagnard history.

In contrast to the relatively numerous anthropological and sociological studies on the Montagnards, there is little material dealing with Montagnard administrative and political history. The few historical studies are reports, mostly unpublished, by French colonial administrators who describe activities in the particular regions under their control.

The written history of the Montagnards is considered to begin with the arrival of the French in the mid-1800's. Although little is documented about Rhade activities before this period, prior to the coming of the French, Rhade society was village-oriented, and villages had some degree of autonomy. Each village was ruled by an oligarchy of leading families. Occasionally one village would become dominant in a local area, thereby forcing other villages to recognize its leadership, but none ever acquired a politically significant area or following.

In the beginning, the Rhade as well as the other tribes resisted the settlement of the Europeans in the highlands.[10] Later the Rhade cooperated considerably with the French administrators, while other Montagnard tribes continued to oppose colonial authority.[11]

Under French rule, the High Plateau became a Domaine de la Couronne directly under the authority of the Emperor. While Vietnamese settlers were practically excluded from this area, the French were permitted to fully exploit the economic resources of the Domaine.

At the end of the 19th century, the French established an administrative system which divided the High Plateau into three provinces, Pleiku, Kontum, and Darlac, each with a French administrator. The largest administrative unit, the province, was in turn divided into districts and cantons.[12] The village remained as the smallest administrative unit with its traditional leadership pattern.[13] Under this administrative system, Montagnards were selected to serve as assistants to the provincial administrators and as officials at the district and canton levels.[14]

The pacification of the Montagnards at the beginning of this century was a slow process. There were numerous attacks on French military personnel and missionaries.[15] In 1905 a small band of tribesmen led by Me Sao appeared in the highlands. They raided villages between M'drac and Ban Me Thuot,[16] and it became necessary for the French administrator of Darlac to send troops to the area to protect the villagers. Me Sao was turned over to the French troops by a member of his own band and died in prison.[17]

During the tenure of Sabatier, the French administrator of Darlac Province in the first quarter of the 20th century, the region underwent many beneficial developments. Sabatier, a French educator and a very able, intelligent administrator, undertook public works projects, improved the administrative system, and undertook a systematic study of the ethnic groups of Darlac Province.[18] He is credited with developing the written form of the Rhade language and codifying the traditional Rhade laws.[19] In establishing a school system and a medical service for the Montagnards, Sabatier was aided by another able administrator named Antomarchi.[20]

In 1925 there was a French colonial land rush in Darlac due to the region's reputation for rich and fertile soil. In a few months, about one hundred bids for land totaling 92,000 hectares were filed with colonial authorities in Saigon.[21] In order to cope with problems created by the land rush, a study was made, and in 1927 Sabatier produced two reports. One dealt primarily with land tenure, and the other contained recommendations for the development of the area. The first report provided detailed information on the land system of the Rhade. One of the recommendations in the second report stated that French settlers bidding for land claimed by the Montagnards should acquire approval of the colonial administration, the Rhade's traditional guardian of the land, the *po lan*, and the headmen of villages in the region under question.

When the Japanese invaded the region in March 1945, some Montagnards assisted them while others resisted them. Similarly, during the Indochina War (1946–1954), some Montagnards fought for the French, while others supported the Viet Minh.

As to historical trends, several people who have had contact with the Rhade feel that the Rhade tribesmen are undergoing a remarkable cultural and social change as their contact with modern civilization continues. These visitors to the Rhade country also agreed that the rate of change varies considerably from village to village. Since the contact with the modern world is most pronounced in the vicinity of Ban Me Thuot, the amount of change varies inversely with the distance of a tribal village from Ban Me Thuot. Some Rhade men, particularly the younger ones, have been recruited by the Government to serve in the army, and this military service brings them into close contact with other modes of life. During their training they are given shoes, clothing, weapons, and medical treatment. They learn something about personal sanitation, field sanitation, scouting and patrolling, field fortifications, first aid, and other basic subjects. Their contact with outside influences has introduced them to alien habits, customs, and beliefs. It is therefore probable that much information about other cultures has filtered back to the various Rhade villages and has influenced village life to some degree.

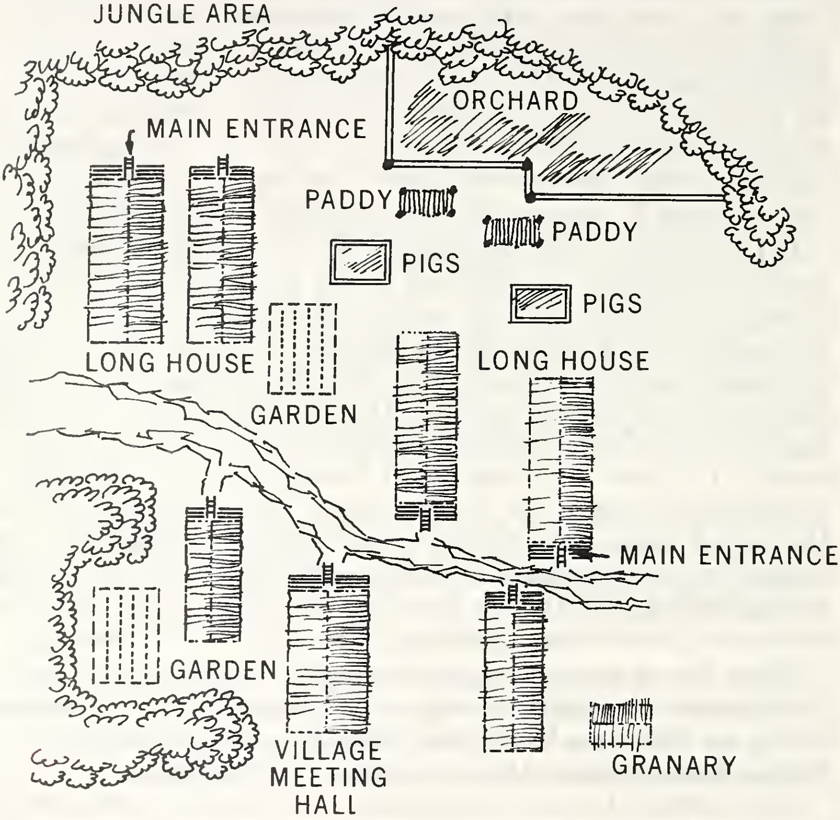

JUNGLE AREA
ORCHARD
MAIN ENTRANCE
PADDY
PADDY
PIGS
PIGS
LONG HOUSE
GARDEN
LONG HOUSE
MAIN ENTRANCE
GARDEN
VILLAGE
MEETING
HALL
GRANARY

Figure 41. Layout of Rhade village.

Settlement Patterns

For centuries the Rhade have lived in the High Plateau, adapting themselves to their natural environment and making use of the natural resources in simple ways. They locate their houses and ricefields near rivers and springs and group together according to kinship ties.

Where there is a road, the Rhade build their houses so that the road runs through the middle of the village. At each end of the village an entrance gate crosses the roadway; although villages are seldom fenced, the road always passes through a gate. The villagers bar these gates during some religious ceremonies when they do not want outsiders to enter the village.

Most Rhade live in villages which usually contain from 50 to 200 people.[22] Customarily built in a cleared area in the jungle, these villages are seldom walled. Inside the villages are fruit trees, frequently protected from the cattle by small bamboo fences. Most villages have a bamboo grove which, because of its religious significance, is not cut down. Other types of trees are allowed to grow within the village area, but the villagers are selective because they know some species do not endure and may fall upon their houses.

From harvest to sowing time, most of the people live in longhouses built on pilings above the ground. Wood, cane, and bamboo are used for the frame, floors, and walls; nails are made of split bamboo. From the floor the walls slant slightly outward to the heavy, rather steep, overhanging roof, which is made of thick thatch, usually tranh grass. These simply designed and solidly built houses can withstand bad weather for a long time and are quite comfortable. While Rhade Kpa build houses about 50 meters long, the A'dham and the Ktul normally build them much longer.[23] The longhouses are usually oriented in a north-south direction, parallel to each other, although in some villages modifications occur due to the nature of the terrain. One reason for the north-south orientation is that the prevailing winds blow across this axis. Thus, smoke from the cooking fires inside the house is blown out the sides, rather than along the length of the house. Other explanations for this directional orientation have been offered; most of these explanations are related to their religion. The east-west direction has important meaning in various religious traditions. For example, one folk belief is that the houses of the living must not face the setting (dying) sun. Another explanation is that the Rhade do not want their homes to resemble the small houses built atop the tombs of the dead, which are built in an east-west direction.

At each end of the longhouse there is a porch-like structure, serving as a repository for winnowing baskets, chicken coops, buffalo ropes, and the like. It is also a favorite spot of the Rhade for resting, pipe smoking, and chatting. The porch at the front is sometimes ornamented with sculptured poles used for mounting and dismounting elephants. Often a notched tree trunk, or sometimes a huge block of hard wood, is carefully cut to form a stairway of narrow steps leading to the front entrance. Rich tribesmen show their position and wealth by the excellence of the woodwork design on these ladders.[24]

There are also special steps used by the women. These are on pilings of thick planks or wooden logs, supported by the projection of a beam; these give the appearance of steps. The steps are decorated with a series of carvings.

Usually, each longhouse has a separate granary in which rice is stored. The granaries are nearly square, though built in the same manner as the longhouses. Granaries may or may not be built on a north-south axis.[25]

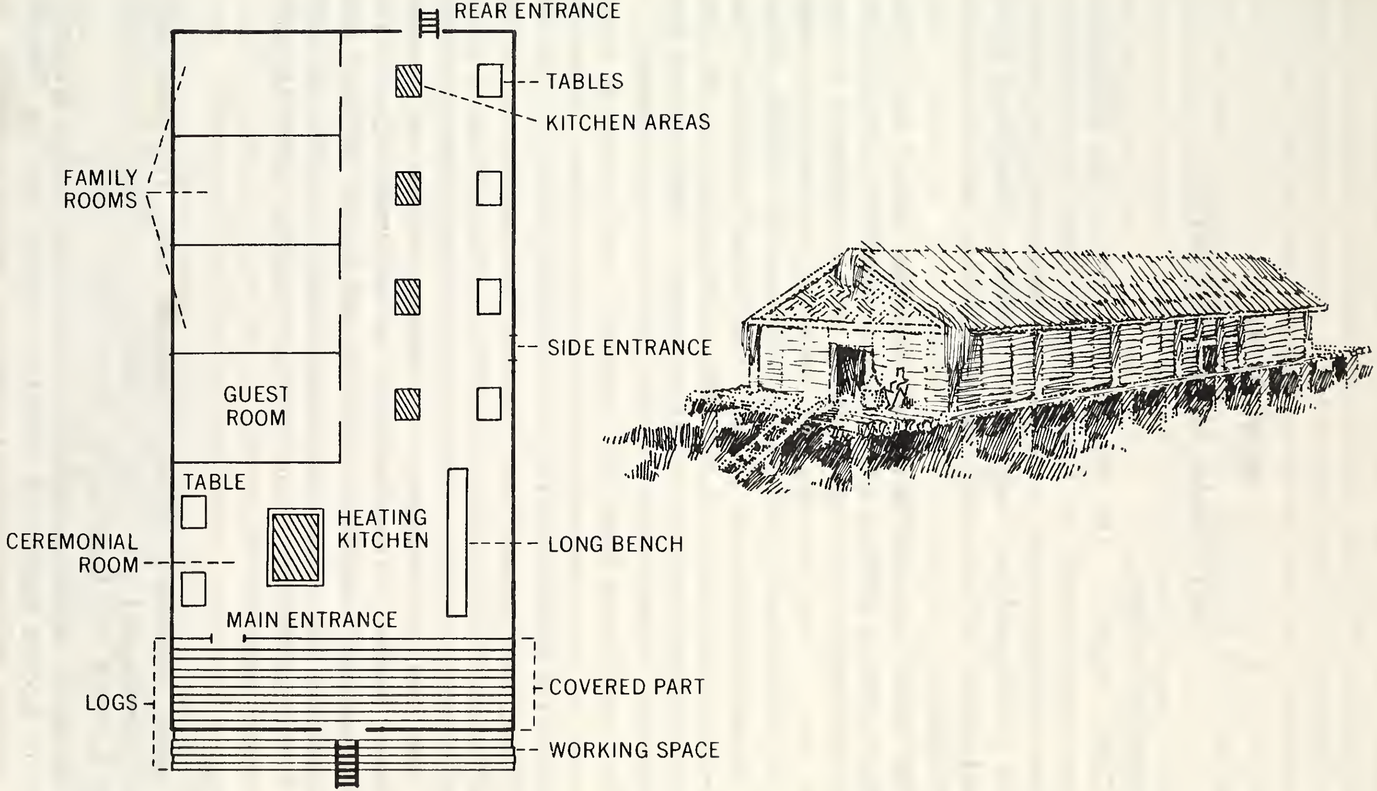

REAR ENTRANCE
TABLES
KITCHEN AREAS
FAMILY ROOMS
SIDE ENTRANCE
GUEST ROOM
TABLE
HEATING KITCHEN
LONG BENCH
CEREMONIAL ROOM
MAIN ENTRANCE
COVERED PART
LOGS
WORKING SPACE

Figure 42. Rhade longhouse.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Closely related to the aboriginal peoples of the Philippines, Borneo, and Indonesia, the Rhade are fairly small, averaging from 5 feet to 5 feet 6 inches in height. Although small, they are built quite sturdily and have very broad shoulders. Analysis of Rhade blood groups indicates some affinity with the neighboring Jarai and Bahnar.[1]

The Rhade have lighter colored skin than that of other Montagnard groups, although the shade is not uniform; certain tribesmen have been nicknamed according to the differences in their skin color. They have clear, brown eyes. Although one study shows that one out of every eight tribesmen has slightly slanted eyes, there is infrequent evidence of the Mongol influence. Their eyes reportedly range from the Chinese almond shape to the Occidental type, and their eyebrows are rounded. Pale skin and dark brown eyes are considered a mark of beauty in their women.[2]

The Rhade have black hair, ranging from straight to wavy. Though the Rhade appear to have more hair on their bodies than many of the other tribes, they are constantly plucking facial hair and only, in exceptional cases, have beards or mustaches.[3] Rhade children have characteristic hair styles: little girls have only a tuft of hair at the back of their head; little boys have short hair.

Their faces are hexagonal with strong jawlines and powerful chewing muscles. The cheekbones are extremely salient; their noses are small, sometimes wrinkled, and slightly flattened with rather thick tips. Their mouths are unobtrusive, the lips being of average thickness. Their chins are rounded, somewhat split, and tend to recede.[4]

Health

Health conditions in Rhade villages are poor. The Rhade (and their dependents) who work for outsiders are generally in much better health than those in the remote tribal villages.

The major factors contributing to their poor health are ignorance of modern health and sanitation practices and the difficulty of securing sufficient medical supplies and medical personnel. Although they bathe often using certain roots as a cleanser, skin infections are common.

The diseases that most frequently affect adults are malaria, enteritis, diarrhea, smallpox, and leprosy. Children's diseases are mainly dysentery, malaria, and whooping cough. Practically all the Rhade suffer from varying degrees of infection, particularly malaria. Ordinarily, in the treatment of any kind of disease, doctors need to treat malaria as well. Intestinal parasites and various skin diseases occur frequently but less often than malaria. Some skin diseases are most difficult to treat because many tribesmen have had them for several years. Dysentery[5] and venereal diseases are common.

The Rhade call upon the spirits for help during time of stress and illness in the family.* A sorcerer or shaman is called to prescribe appropriate sacrifices. The longer the sickness the more expensive the sacrifices for they may include buffaloes, pigs, and jugs of rice wine. The shaman usually starts with the sacrifice of a pig and five jugs of rice wine. According to traditional Rhade folk medicine, if a healer prescribes the sacrifice of cows or buffaloes to cure a sick person and the patient does not improve, the healer must replace the sacrificed animals.[6]

Although the shaman is the specialist for prescribing cures, some family remedies are used. For instance, all sores are cleaned with hot water and painted with tree or plant medicines. Boils are allowed to come to a head, then punctured and drained. If the boil does not begin to heal, a small hole is burned in the boil with a heated piece of metal. Various medicines prepared from plants are used for coughs, rashes, and infected eyes.

It is a common belief that diarrhea in small children is caused by teething. The remedy for prolonged diarrhea in children requires that a jar and a chicken be sacrificed. Older children and adults are given medicine derived from the bark, roots, or leaves of local trees. If the patient passes blood, he must be given the urine of a scorpion. This concoction is given without the patient's knowledge, since very few, if any, would drink scorpion urine voluntarily.

During an epidemic in a village, signs are put up forbidding all passage.[7] Since these signs vary from one area to another it is therefore advisable to check the meaning of any signs in a given locale. Tribespeople with contagious diseases must stay at home, and every sickness must be reported to the chief.[8] If anyone has smallpox or leprosy, his family must provide for his isolation in the forest.[9] Severe action is taken against anyone who shelters a leper; when a leper dies, his house and belongings are burned. Finding a dead person and not reporting the incident is considered the same as killing him. The cause of his death may be very significant to the village, for he may have been the first victim of a contagious disease.[10] Failure to report his death might be the cause of additional deaths.

---

* See "Religion," p. 685.

Physical resistance to disease is low, partially due to the diet of the Rhade. The women are particularly affected by dietary deficiency because of their strenuous labor in the fields. Since pregnancy aggravates their weak condition, many miscarriages result.

Many traditional customs and religious requirements govern behavior and activities during pregnancy and birth. Therefore, it is difficult to persuade a Rhade woman to give birth in a hospital outside the tribal area. The women are very modest, and it takes great courage for them to call for medical aid. Rhade women find it difficult to lift a skirt before a man, and even the most ordinary obstetrical practices frighten them terribly. Because their feelings of shame reach such extreme limits,[11] a physician must always act with utmost discretion.

The Rhade believe in good and bad deaths: a bad death—one associated with a bloody accident or violence—is believed to cause the ghost of the deceased to wander the highlands forever. Although in the past this attitude resulted in Rhade antipathy for medicine, many of them now recognize the benefits of medical care and freely request and accept treatment.

Various outside groups have taken an active part in trying to better health conditions in the Rhade area. Although their supplies and manpower are limited, medicine is periodically received, and some tribespeople are taught how to administer it. Occasionally, medical people accompanying military units in the Rhade area have found it useful to work with the Rhade medicine men and sorcerers in treating the ills of the Rhade people.

The Rhade are not accustomed to taking medicines in pill form; they prefer injections. This is largely attributable to French medical practice which depended primarily on injections. The Rhade do not understand how a pill can be as effective as an injection and have difficulty understanding, for example, how a pill can cure an infected toe or any other external wound. When explaining the proper dosage of pills to the Rhade—if pills must be used—one must be very careful that the Rhade understand their proper usage and understand the intervals at which they must be taken.

Endurance

The Rhade are not capable of working as long or as hard as a Westerner in Western kinds of work. On the other hand, they can walk for days without tiring while carrying loads on their shoulders.[12] Because their work primarily involves farming and building, the Rhade seem able to endure a great amount of physical strain. It is also reported that they are able to run better than average distance without stopping or showing signs of fatigue. Dietary deficiencies, however, make the Rhade require rest and food quite often.

Psychological Characteristics

For a psychological understanding of the Rhade, it is necessary to recognize the strong family ties that influence the individual. Family relationships are taken most seriously, and in a sense any act by an individual is considered an act of his family. An individual will not often make his own decisions, but will express his desire to discuss any matter with his relatives before reaching a conclusion.

The Rhade believe that man cannot challenge supernatural power; they accept their fate and take no practical measures to safeguard themselves from natural calamities. They accept serious misfortunes, such as fire and disease, because they attribute such occurrences to the evil influence of local spirits. This fatalism carries over into the realm of human relations; the Rhade sometimes agree to suggestions by outsiders simply because the outsiders are stronger than they.

Most observers consider the Rhade the most intelligent Montagnard tribe. One source even claims that Rhade tribesmen can learn practically anything. For example, a missionary group established a leprosarium in the Ban Me Thuot area and trained Rhade to carry out all tasks; this leprosarium is now completely staffed by Rhade.

The Rhade have a very strong desire to learn, particularly to learn the ways of outsiders with whom they have recently come into contact. They do, however, seek and require very explicit instructions and do not like to improvise. As a rule, the Rhade resist routine work; they like to attack new problems as long as they have detailed instructions and close supervision.

The Rhade have reported favorably to inquiries concerning language training for the tribe. The Rhade accept the idea of their children learning a foreign language and would like to send them to school for training in Vietnamese, French, or English. The Rhade learn English quite rapidly.

The Rhade see education as a means to better their communities and, when it is offered in these terms, they greatly desire to send their children to school. Young people do leave the village to study or to work for outsiders; this is accepted, even encouraged, by their families as long as the traditional bonds of respect are observed.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Rhade society is organized into the basic elements of the family, the household, the kin group, and the village, in order of descending importance. The kinship system is matrilineal: the woman's family proposes marriage to the man's family; the husband becomes part of the wife's family; the children take the mother's family name; and, property belongs to the wife and is inherited by the daughters.

Kinship System and Tribal Structure

In general, the underlying principles of the Rhade kinship system are lineage, generation, sex, and seniority. Lineage is determined through the female line and consists of those individuals related through female kin to a common ancestor—the great-great grandmother on the mother's side. Groupings of lineages form clans.

The longhouse is the most important corporate kin group. It is the mutual aid group which, in addition to sharing and maintaining the longhouse, often shares food and always participates in cultivation of the common longhouse fields. Gongs, jars, cattle, and rice, as well as the house, are lineage property, the title to which is held by the senior female. The head of the lineage longhouse is a male and, upon his death, is replaced either by his son-in-law or the husband of one of his wife's sisters. If the successor is a minor, the eldest male in the house can temporarily assume the role of household head. If there is no son-in-law or brother-in-law, a nephew may succeed.*

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Property, such as the house, gongs, jars, and harvest, is owned by the females of the house; inheritance proceeds down the female line. The oldest woman in the family controls the disposition of the family property. Also, Rhade society is matrilocal: upon marriage the couple lives in the longhouse of the girl's mother. However, the chief of a longhouse is a man. The overall management of the livelihood and daily routine of the family is directed by the senior male living in the house, often the husband of the senior woman. It has been said, however, that the men in this position are less leaders in their own right than they are instruments of the women.[1]

---

* For more detailed anthropological information, see Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964) and A. Maurice and G. Proux, "L'Âme du riz," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, Special Issue, XXIX (1954), 5–134.

Among the Rhade there is a normal division of labor between the sexes with the males doing most of the heavy work, including clearing and burning the fields, cutting heavy trees, some of the harvesting and planting, and conducting business. They fish, make tools and implements, slaughter animals, weave bamboo, build houses, make coffins, and bury the dead, play the flute, beat gongs, play drums, and cook rice for the various ceremonies. The men also conduct religious ceremonies and manage all political and military affairs.

The women oversee the farming activities, and the senior woman in each clan, called a po lan, represents her clan as keeper and protector of its ancestral lands.* The po lan, as guardian of the land, gives permission for the cultivation of selected individual plots of land. In addition to this control of the land itself, the women work in the rice fields, weeding, sowing, harvesting, and winnowing. The women also draw water, collect firewood, cook, clean the house, weave, wash clothes, and make the traditional red, black, yellow, and blue cotton thread of the tribe. Sometimes the women play the flute, and occasionally one will find female sorcerers and religious practitioners.

Rhade tribespeople are very fond of their children and raise them permissively. They treat children almost as if they were adults with minds of their own, seldom forcing a child to do something he does not want to do. This respect for a child's wishes may stem from the Rhade belief that their ancestors are reincarnated in newborn infants. Play activities of Rhade children are varied: they walk on stilts, fly kites, play with tops, and swim.[2] Small children have certain chores during planting and harvesting periods, but ordinarily do little work in the fields.[3] When children approach the age of puberty, they begin to participate fully in the agricultural routine. They also are expected to watch the younger children and to help care for the domestic animals.[4]

Daily Routine

The entire Rhade family gets up before dawn. The men leave for the fields and are joined by most of the women and younger sons about 2 hours later. Everyone works in the fields until the women designated to remain in the village bring them lunch. After the meal, the women work in the fields until about 3 o'clock, when they go home to prepare supper. The men generally continue to work until about 5 o'clock, when they return to the village for supper.

---

* See "Property System," p. 694.

In the evening, the people spend their leisure time talking to others who live in the longhouse or to neighbors. Life in the longhouse with the extended family is very sociable. It has been noted that when a tribesman moves to a small house, in a resettlement program for example, he misses the sociability and security of family life in the longhouse and usually takes the first opportunity to return to it.[5]

The Rhade also spend considerable time performing religious ceremonies and sacrifices. Their religion permeates every part of their daily life and work, requiring the performance of many ceremonies.

Marriage

According to the Rhade tradition, marriages are arranged by the parents of the couple. The family of the girl first approaches the family of a prospective mate through an intermediary. If the preliminary approach determines that the extended family of the boy might consider such a marriage, a direct approach is made to them.[6] Arrangements for a marriage between a boy and a girl are often established by the two families many years in advance of the marriage ceremony.[7]

Marriage regulations vary somewhat by subgroup, but generally, the Rhade groups are exogamous—they do not marry within the extended family or, in some cases, within the clan. The union of descendants of a family with the same name is also forbidden.[8] Violations of these prohibitions require the guilty parties to sacrifice a pig to soothe the angry spirits.

It should be noted that some marriages result from the custom of replacing a dead spouse with a relative from within the same family.* This usually involves a younger sister or a younger brother of the deceased wife or husband.

Also, a marriage might be the result of a mutual attraction between a boy and a girl. Such relationships develop from meetings at festivals, at work during the harvest, or at ceremonies.[9] A boy and girl could develop a very close relationship if, by custom, they exchange bracelets. In a sense this is a tacit engagement, because the relationship between the two is considered binding: the boy has entered into an agreement to marry the girl if she becomes pregnant.

The essential part of the marriage ceremony is the celebration of the sacrifice. The engaged couple squat before a jar, drinking rice wine through long reed straws while prayers are chanted. With their feet placed on a hatchet, symbolizing the permanence of the union, they continue to drink, crossing the straws. Offerings are then presented at the east windows of the longhouse to the spirits of the dead, thereby symbolizing the foundation of a new hearth in the longhouse. After this, everyone present is served a communal meal—a square of raw meat and a piece of intestine or tripe. Finally, the guests file by the newly married couple and offer them small gifts for which they each receive one worth twice as much in return. This is a symbolic act to assure the couple of a rich and prosperous future.[10] Following the marriage, the couple participates fully in the tribal society and its religious life.[11]

---

* See "Divorce and Second Marriages," p. 669.

Traditionally, a newly married couple moved to the longhouse of the family of the young woman, though the man could work a separate field if he so desired. It is the tribal custom for the girl's family to pay the boy's family a price, a dowry to compensate them for the loss of their son. According to tribal law, if the dowry is not paid on the date fixed by the marriage arrangements—usually, immediately following the marriage ceremony—the groom returns to his own family.[12] The boy's family, however, may request that the girl stay with them until full payment can be made. This period may last up to 3 years. Once the dowry has been paid, the couple resides in the longhouse of the bride's family.

The Rhade feel marriage is a permanent contract, and there are several traditional laws which deal with adultery. In adultery between married persons, the woman pays a fine to her husband and the man to his wife.[13] If a man commits adultery with a married woman, he is guilty of the crime, not she.[14] As has been noted, however, she must pay her husband a fine.

There are several Rhade laws which deal with rape. The blood price—the penalty for the shedding of another person's blood—is exacted in cases of rape where the girl is under the age of puberty. In other cases of rape, the severity of the penalty depends on whether the woman is the wife or daughter of a poor or of a rich man; the penalty is less in the former instance than in the latter.

Incest, which includes sexual relations between members of the same clan, is believed to render the land impure and to endanger its fertility. Sacrifices are therefore necessary to purify it again. A pig must be sacrificed to purify the forest and a jar of rice wine must be sacrificed to purify the earth. A fine is paid to the chief and one to the po lan, guardian of the ancestral land.

Divorce and Second Marriages

The Rhade believe that a man should stay with his wife until death.[15] However, divorces or separations do occur. Traditional law states that if the husband and wife separate, they must return the dowry and the bracelets they have exchanged. They are then free to remarry.[16]

Traditionally, if one of the partners in a marriage died, the family of the deceased spouse had to find a replacement from within the family. If one was not available within that family, one had to be found in the families of sisters of the deceased: the replacement had to belong to the same clan as the deceased spouse. In recent years, however, this custom has become less common. If the deceased is a woman and her family refuses to find a replacement, most of the goods acquired in common go to the nieces of the widower, and the children of his marriage with the deceased receive only a small portion.[17] If the deceased is a man and his family does not wish to find a replacement, a small part of the couple's goods goes to the nieces of the deceased.

A widow who wishes to remarry asks the parents of the man she has chosen. If the parents and the young man agree, the marriage takes place, and the new husband lives with his wife's parents. In such a case, the dowry has to be paid by the husband's parents. This custom applies to widows of chiefs as well as to all other widows. The widow of a chief, even if she is old and ugly, always remarries. The new husband becomes chief of the village, but instead of calling the village Ban Me followed by the name of the chief, it becomes Ban Noi, *noi* meaning "replacing."

If a husband is away for several years, or is taken prisoner or made a slave, his wife can remarry.[18]

Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth

As in all other aspects of Rhade living, religion, spirits, and folk beliefs are deeply ingrained in the rituals surrounding pregnancy and birth. When a woman has been declared pregnant by a midwife, a sorcerer must make a sacrifice of a dog and a jar of rice wine. This ceremony, called *kik k'kieng*, takes place during the 3rd or 4th month of pregnancy and is designed to keep evil spirits away from the pregnant woman. After the sacrifice, the woman must stay in the house for 3 days, and before she leaves, she must take a bath to purify herself.[19]

There are many food restrictions for a pregnant woman. For example, she cannot eat fruit because it will make the baby fall out of the womb as fruit falls from a tree.[20] If she eats rabbit, he will be cowardly.[21]

From the 5th or 6th month of pregnancy, the woman works only in the house.[22] Also, from this time she is prohibited sexual relations.

Miscarriages are quite frequent among the Rhade tribeswomen and are generally caused by malaria.[23] In the case of a woman who has had six or seven miscarriages or stillborn children, a family council decides whether abortion should be induced. The abortion is performed by a midwife in an abandoned house in order to avoid attracting evil spirits to the family longhouse.[24]

If either an unmarried girl or a married woman wants an abortion, she agrees never to name the midwife. If the midwife agrees, the price will be very high, for a woman found guilty of performing an illegal abortion is required to pay a blood price of a flat gong. The midwife is seldom caught, however, because women are reluctant to admit that they have had an abortion.[25]

In cases of normal pregnancy, the midwife does not see the woman from the time she has diagnosed pregnancy until the birth starts.[26] If the family of a pregnant woman is rich, the midwife always foresees a difficult birth and thereby makes the family promise a large sacrifice if the birth is normal. For poor families the same sacrifice is promised, if the midwife thinks the pregnant woman is in bad health or if she has had a history of difficult births.[27]

A woman who has had many abortions must have her child in an abandoned house so that the evil spirits will not endanger the other members of the household.[28]

After labor pains have started, a sacrifice, *phat atao* is made in front of the house. Rice wine, a pipe, and a young rooster with its comb barely formed are offered. All the departed souls of the family are called on to intervene to make the child beautiful, to make the birth easy, to protect the mother, and to give her many more children so that the whole family, the living and dead, may become larger.[29]

When the midwife has delivered the baby, the mother is then placed near the family hearth, and her body is rubbed with ginger.[30] According to Rhade custom, women can stay in bed 6 or 7 days after childbirth. In general, however, they get up after 3 or 4 days.[31] The infant is suckled until he learns to eat rice, at the age of 2. When the mother does not have milk, another woman nurses the infant. The mother teaches the child to eat rice by chewing it and then putting it into the mouth of the child.[32]

Parents always wish to have a daughter, especially if it is the first child. The birth of twins is a disaster, for a Rhade woman is physically incapable of nursing the two children. It is customary to find a wet nurse for one of the twins. If the twins are of different sexes, the family always keeps the girl. If they are both of the same sex, the larger and more beautiful one is kept.[33]

If a child is born dead or dies before the midwife has purified herself by washing completely, a sacrifice, *ktubue*, must be offered so that the evil spirits will not ruin her health or her profession. Depending on whether the midwife is from a rich or poor family, a pig or a chicken must be sacrificed.[34]

Evil spirits are blamed when a child is born with a malformation. Even though the defect can be corrected, the parents are extremely reluctant to have this done because the evil spirits will then manifest themselves in the next child.[35]

If a sacrifice has been promised when the midwife declares a woman pregnant, it is made from 3 to 6 days after birth. This is the only occasion when a billy goat is used for sacrifice. If the family does not have or cannot buy a billy goat, they must sacrifice a pig or a chicken, which will satisfy the spirits until the family can obtain a billy goat.[36]

The Rhade believe each person has three souls,* the second one being important at birth. This second soul, the *yun,* is considered the source of life. It enters the body of the newborn child through a bluish mark, the "Mongolian mark," near the base of its spine. This mark, which the Rhade call *anok ba yun,* is found on most Rhade babies. It disappears when the child is 2 or 3 years old. The baby's first cry indicates that the breath or lifegiving element has entered its body. This second soul, yun, is called *m'ngah,* life, while it resides in a body. It becomes yun when it has left one body but has not yet entered another.

The *prap yun* is a sacrifice for the yun during its voyage from one body to another. The prap yun takes place shortly after birth.[37] At this time a prayer called *kliang kong* is made for the baby's safety. The prayer asks the benevolent spirits to provide a good soul which will stay in the child's body.

Po yun is the name given a person whose yun has entered the baby's body and becomes the infant's m'ngah. Relatives often try to determine which ancestor is the baby's po yun.

According to Rhade traditional law, it is a crime not to report a birth to the village chief.[38] A person who kills his newborn infant or child is likewise criminally guilty.[39]

Naming the Child

The naming ceremony, called *bi hoa bue,* occurs the day after a child is born. At this time, before the mother is given a meal, the midwife names the infant. She puts a drop of dew on the child's tongue and says, "What is your name? Your name, is it (giving the proposed name)?" The child's smile indicates that it is his name, but if he cries, the family knows that the departed spirits of the family are not pleased, and this little ceremony must be repeated with a different name until the child smiles or is quiet. The names spoken are selected from those of deceased maternal aunts and uncles.[40] The dewdrop contains the spirits of these dead relatives. Thus, all the dead maternal aunts and uncles are agents in the selection of the child's name. And, in a sense, the deceased maternal aunts and uncles also make up the *tlang hia*, a person's third soul.

---

* See discussion of souls in "Religion," p. 685.

After a naming ceremony, a sacrifice of a chicken and a cone filled with meat sprinkled with rice is stuck into the thatch of the roof as an offering to the evil spirit of violent deaths. This spirit is supposed to be responsible for abortions and accidental deaths.[41]

Childhood

Rhade tribesmen are very fond of children and they are reported to have bought Vietnamese children to raise as their own, giving them Rhade names. Rhade families are usually smaller than Vietnamese families. This is attributable to disease and a high infant mortality rate. In the Darlac region the average mortality rate of infants under 1 year is 60 to 70 percent, and from 10 to 15 percent of the children between the ages of 1 and 5 die. Malaria causes the largest number of deaths among children.[42]

Rhade children have much independence, although according to Rhade traditional law, parents are responsible for all acts of their children.[43] During the first 5 years of their lives, Rhade children are not disciplined, because the parents think paying too much attention to them will attract evil spirits. They never force a child to do anything against his will. For example, if a doctor in the village is treating a child, and the child does not want to take medicine, his relatives do not force him.[44] This lack of attention is one reason for the high death rate among Rhade children.[45]

Certain actions of a child are taken to be signs of participation in the life of another person. For example, if a child enters a neighboring longhouse and seems to recognize objects which might have belonged to a deceased uncle, this implies to the Rhade that a mysterious liaison between the living child and the deceased person exists. If the child wants to play with something which belonged to the uncle, the child's right to it is incontestable.[46]

During the early years of his life, a child is not called by the name given to him in the naming ceremony described above. Instead, he is called by other vulgar names to discourage evil spirits and to protect him from their works. False names are given such as *eh*, excrement; *bru*, rotten; *djie*, death; and *trung*, big stomach. The false name is used to trick the evil spirits, who do not notice children with such unattractive names. At the age of 5, when danger from the evil spirits is past, the child's real name is used. In addition to its personal name, the child uses the mother's family name.[47] By receiving the name of the mother's family the child becomes a member of her clan.[48]

Education and Child-Rearing Practices

The children who escape the ravages of infant diseases are taught the village customs and habits of life. The boys learn to make snares, nets, and winnowing baskets and are initiated into the secrets of the bush by their elders. The girls play with small spinning wheels and miniature looms, thus learning the art of weaving and making clothes; they also begin to husk rice and help their mothers.[49]

Missionary groups have taught some of the Rhade to read and write, and some villages have school teachers.

Puberty Rite

A former custom among the Rhade was an initiation ceremony marking the attainment of adulthood. It is reported that in this ceremony the child to be initiated paid for the sacrifice of a pig, and his upper front teeth were removed, in the following manner: the patient, lying on a mat, was made to bite a piece of wood so that the jaws were well separated and the lower jaw protected. Then with a sickle (normally used for cutting thatch), the practitioner filed parallel to the gum line, cutting the gum and reducing the tooth to powder. The curvature of the jaw allowed the upper incisor and canine teeth to be filed at the same time. The operation was bloody and painful, and lasted 30 minutes to an hour. Immediately afterward the mouth was washed with warm water. If, by accident, a baby tooth had been filed and a permanent tooth later replaced it, the operation was generally, but not always, repeated. It was a bad omen for a tooth to fall out or break during the operation.[50]

A mixture of rice wine, pig's blood, and blood from the child's foot was drunk by the people at the ceremony. The boy or girl then received a bracelet engraved with a secret mark.[51]

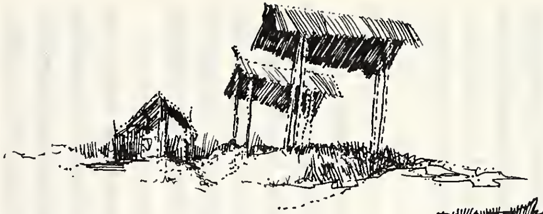
The practice of removing the front teeth is now apparently dying out.[52]

Death and Burial

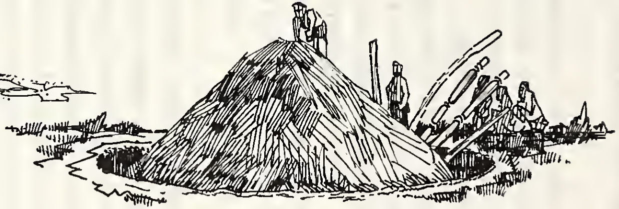
The Rhade prefer to die in their own villages because their local spirits cannot protect them outside the immediate area. Consequently, if the Rhade are in a hospital and believe they are dying, they will insist on being taken home. If a Rhade does die in a hospital, the tribesman responsible for his being there will be in trouble with the deceased person's family.[53]

If, despite the care of the healers and of the family, despite the buffaloes sacrificed and despite the wine jars emptied, a person dies, the death is announced by beating a drum. For several days thereafter all the inhabitants of the longhouse are subject to certain interdictions. They may not work, trade, or travel. They must occupy themselves solely with the preparations for the funeral which vary according to the wealth, sex, and status of the

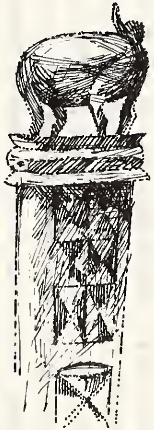
~~Illustration 43. Rhade tombs~~



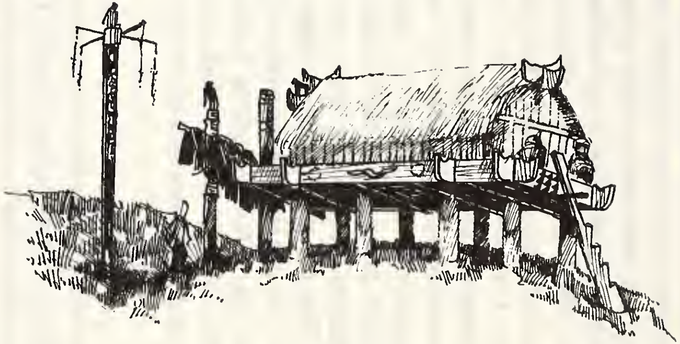
A'dham tombs



Kpa burial mound



Ktul tomb statue



Ktul burial house

Figure 43. Rhade tombs.

deceased, and the custom of the tribe. The ceremony may last several days.

The body is placed in a coffin made of fairly soft wood, but if the deceased was an important person, he has the right to an outer coffin of hardwood, a source of great vanity before death. This outer coffin will often take the stylized shape of a longhouse and is carved with geometrical designs.

Placing the body in the coffin is the occasion for new sacrifices and libations. The coffin is blessed to drive away the evil spirits which might lurk there. While jars of rice wine are being drunk, friends dig a deep rectangular grave at the burial ground.[54]

The coffin is placed on a rack of branches and carried through the village to the burial place. During this procession and the funeral itself, the people who have been close to the deceased carry the coffin and take the initiative in the funeral. Everyone who comes to the funeral participates in covering the coffin with branches and leaves and then building the dirt mound over the grave. The size of the mound, the number of guests, and the style of activities indicate the importance of the deceased.

The Rhade bury their dead with the heads turned toward the east.[55] The funeral services differ according to the type of death: whether the death was natural or an accident, whether it occurred far from the village, whether it was caused by a contagious disease or whether the death was that of someone condemned to die, that of a fetus, a stillborn infant, or an infant dead before the cord was cut.[56]

Many people attend Rhade funerals. Social mores require that friends, relatives, and important persons attend the funeral.

The Rhade A'dham build large funeral huts on four pilings, and inside the hut offer numerous gifts to the dead. The tomb itself is rectangular, and a small pathway of earth traverses a ditch at the middle of each side. Two sculptured wooden posts decorate each of the four exterior corners of a rich person's tomb. Jars and various types of animals are often represented on these posts.[57]

According to Rhade law, a person who constructs a tomb on someone else's land must pay a fine equal to the value of the latter person's harvest. He must also give a white buffalo to the guardian of the earth, the po lan, and to the owners of the field, give a white pig for sacrifice.[58]

A deceased person may be metamorphosed or reincarnated as a newborn child, but more often he acquires formidable power by joining the ranks of the spirits of the dead. Every month the family offers him a meal placed on a small bamboo table at the grave site. This continues for a varying length of time, depending on the wealth of the family and the closeness of their kinship tie with the deceased. The grave is carefully tended until the ceremony of abandonment of the tomb.[59]

The celebration of the abandonment may be as solemn as the funeral itself. When the tomb has been totally abandoned, the widow can remarry and the deceased is considered to be completely in the world of the dead. If a great deal of disease or many deaths occur in the family of a deceased person, a body may be exhumed because it is believed the deceased is not satisfied with his tomb. In such an exhumation, though rarely practiced now, the remains of the body are put in a jar with a stopper and buried at the head of the tomb.[60] This exhumation must be ordered by a sorcerer, who decides which deceased member of the family is causing the trouble. The tomb chosen can be either a maintained or an abandoned one, but it cannot be a tomb that has been abandoned for more than 15 years.

The time between burial and the ceremony for abandoning the tomb varies according to the wealth of the deceased: 1 year for the poor and 5 to 6 years for the rich. The ceremony usually takes place in March after the monsoon if the harvest has been good. The reason for waiting until after the harvest is a question of economics, for then the family will know whether there will be enough rice to provide for a large number of guests.[61]

It takes 2 days to prepare for this ceremony. Sculptured posts, on which rice houses are placed, must be made for the sepulchral mound.[62] Buffaloes are sacrificed at this ceremony, and depending on the wealth of the deceased, as many as five animals may be sacrificed.[63]

The abandonment of the tomb is one of the most important Rhade ceremonies. The family, the villagers, and relatives and friends from other villages attend. All bring jars of rice wine and place them around the tomb, and a large meal is prepared for the deceased. From this time on, the deceased must ask the spirits for anything he wants, and the family is no longer responsible to him.

During the ceremony, a chicken is released to fly away. This chicken represents the soul escaping the tomb, signifying that the deceased is no longer a prisoner of the spirits. This ceremony redeems the dead person and liberates his soul from the spirit that caused his death.[64]

To conclude the ceremony, various plants are set in the sepulchral mound by female relatives. The Rhade consider any disturbance of these plants a serious offense.[65]

After the ceremony, the wine from all the jars is drunk, and the sacrificed food is eaten. This celebration lasts until all food and rice wine have been consumed; then the mourners take their jars and other personal belongings and go home.[66]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Customs and taboos among the Rhade vary considerably from village to village and are influenced by the village chief, the local religious leader, and the po lan. Rhade cultural practices have been changing rapidly, particularly in areas where tribespeople have had contact with the Vietnamese and other outsiders.

Dress

Even though the costume of the Rhade is like that of many other tribal peoples of the Republic of Vietnam, there are particular modes of dress that are characteristic of this tribe. Except for people of high importance or social prominence, clothing for the men consists of a standard loincloth, usually blue or scarlet, and an indigo blue shirt with long narrow sleeves and decorated with polychromatic designs woven into the material. The chest of the shirt is decorated with a series of red hooks and loops that fasten with small leather buttons. In recent years, however, the men have begun to wear Western style shorts and shirts.[1] The men also wear turbans, which may have a Malaysian or Arabic origin.

The women wear either a skirt (a wrap-around cloth that reaches the ground and allows part of the leg to show when walking), or calico pants and a sweater or vest, which may or may not have sleeves. They also may wear close-fitting blouses without hooks and loops. In some remote areas the women are bare-chested.

From the Jarai, the Rhade often buy wide belts with red and white designs and long fringes that sweep the dust. In the wintertime, when a biting northeast wind blows across the Plateau, the tribesmen wrap themselves in large cotton blankets, ornamented with a series of motifs in many colors, woven by the women.[2]

Men and women often wear very large hats of intricately woven cane which have the form of a flattened skull-cap.[3]

The women pay particular attention to their hairdos. Some pull their hair back, twisting the end of it into a coil, and then pushing the coil into a chignon which is secured with a tin pin. Sometimes a lock of hair falls gracefully on the neck.

Rhade jewelry is fairly simple, particularly in comparison with that of the neighboring M'nong. Women wear small leather balls in their ears, while the men wear small thin pieces of wood that close the opening of the lobe. Rhade men also wear iron neck rings. Both men and women wear bracelets. These bracelets are signs either of special friendship or of a vow to the spirits and are used to represent an alliance. Women also wear heavy, tin, ankle bracelets, some of which are very beautiful and may be of Cham origin.[4]

Folk Beliefs

The folk beliefs of the Rhade are intimately related to their animistic religion.* Each animate and inanimate object is inhabited by a spirit. There are both good and evil spirits. Evil spirits can cause anything from petty annoyance to major disasters, and they must be constantly appeased by sacrifices. The individual living in this society finds himself in a world of many very complex requirements, if he is to live safely and successfully.

A technique of divination, called *epa gie*, or "measuring the stick with the arm," is designed to ascertain the desires of the good and evil spirits that influence the smallest detail of each person's daily life. This consists of interrogating a spirit of the stick through an intermediary. A question is asked of the spirit and of the intermediary, who then measures his arm on a bamboo stick previously cut to that length. Under the influence of the spirit of the stick, the intermediary goes into a trance and is unable to stretch out his arm. The differences of degree of arm movement are observed and interpreted as responses of the spirit of the bamboo stick.

Only men can measure the stick. They can be of any age, clan, or tribe, but they are usually over 17. Measuring the stick is considered a special gift, although an individual who knows he has this gift may hide it. Men successful in measuring the stick de-

The divination can occur either indoors or outdoors. It cannot be performed in a house where there is a dead person; it is usually not performed where a woman is giving birth, because birth and death are two events that arouse the spirits.

The stick is asked questions about all circumstances when it is important to know the intentions of the spirits. For example, the stick is consulted about the best location for a new house; for in-
velop a reputation and fame even outside their village. Only men question the spirit of the stick: women must ask questions through their husbands or maternal uncles.
terpretation of dreams; and to determine which spirit is causing a particular ailment in a person or in an animal. Divination guidance might also include the correct sacrifice to obtain a cure.

The Rhade believe in omens which can order their lives. When there is a death in the village, building of a house is stopped and does not begin again until the burial is completed.[5] If a turtle facing eastward is seen in the rice fields, a speedy death is presaged because the incident reminds the Rhade of their custom of burying the deceased with the head toward the east, and the turtle shell resembles the mounded shape of Rhade graves.[6] The movement of birds and small animals in the brush, the howl of the roe-deer, and the song of the m'lang birds are ill omens. If a deer barks three times in a newly prepared rice field, death will strike the family. If a crow lands on a longhouse during its construction, the structure must be abandoned or the family will suffer bad luck. When a Rhade walks through the forest, a call from a certain bird on his left heralds bad luck, whereas a call from the right forecasts good fortune. The appearance of a tiger, a snake, or a monkey is reason to stop work and make special sacrifices. It is forbidden to kill any kind of snake in the tribal fields.[7] The sight of a lizard is always unfavorable and is a prediction of death.[8]

---

* See "Religion," p. 685.

Sneezing has a special significance among the Rhade. They believe sneezing irritates the spirits, and after a sneeze by a person or an animal, one must remain still until the spirits recover from their anger. An early morning sneeze before going to work insures good luck for the rest of the day. A sneeze, however, during a trip or upon starting a trip or departing from a person's home, requires a short delay to prevent misfortune.

A person who leaves a village taking his mats, jars, dishes, chickens, and pigs without offering rice or corn to each house, arouses the anger of the dead and of the spirits. If a person in the village should become sick, the departed person is brought back and required to pay for all the sacrificed animals. If the sick person dies, the departed person must pay the blood price because he is considered responsible for the death.[9]

Dreams, especially those about unfavorable matters, assume great importance in the lives of the Rhade. Dreaming of water means that fire will destroy the house or possibly even the village. Dreaming of large fish or jars evokes a sense of death. If one dreams that his teeth are broken, there will be deaths in the family. The upper teeth represent the mother; the bottom, the father; and those on the sides, brothers, sisters, and cousins. A dream about an accident is a warning to remain at home and avoid an inevitable mishap. A dream about a red blanket also forecasts trouble. If a Rhade dreams about fishing and then goes fishing and catches a white fish, he will have good fortune. Dreaming of harvesting eggplant means that people will be severely critical of the dreamer. A pregnant woman who dreams about a knife or a crossbow, will give birth to a boy, while one who dreams about a basket will have a girl. Generally, the first sacrifice of the day is a magical measure designed to ward off or overshadow the portents of the previous night's dreams.[10]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

Since it is a Rhade custom to be hospitable to travelers, tribesmen are always ready to welcome guests. As a result it is not necessary for a traveler to carry food or drink. The proprietor of any Rhade house will provide nourishment to a traveler without expecting anything in return. Friendship can be easily established provided the guest does not elicit distrust.

Interpersonal relationships between outsiders and the Rhade must be conducted with the utmost sensitivity and discretion. The Rhade have very definite opinions about the manner of dealing and acting with people. If an outsider violates these rules, he may affect his rapport with the community. The visitor who comes to the village must visit the chief or, in lieu of him, his assistant. After his first diplomatic formality, he will be warmly received by the family that will house him.

Ordinarily, when a stranger enters a village, a tribesman will approach and "shake hands" with him. The proper procedure is to shake one's own left hand with the right hand of the tribesman and bow slightly.[11] On receiving a guest, it is customary to show him to the sitting room near the fireplace and to provide him with a mat, the warmth of the fire, and some tobacco. A guest of high standing is offered a drink of rice wine.

Unless an outsider is very well known by the villagers, the women will generally retreat to their houses when he walks into a village.

Occasionally, a woman who is considered a leader in the village may come out to meet him. If a stranger meets a woman walking through the village, the woman pretends she does not notice him.

Often a metal bracelet is given to a stranger. The bracelet is evidence of a number of minor privileges—such as the right to touch certain sacred drums—which may vary in detail from village to village. It also assures the visitor of the protection of the tribe.

The Rhade do not seem to mind the attendance of outsiders, at funerals and other religious ceremonies; in fact, the tribesmen consider such attendance to be an honor. In order to attend, the person who is responsible for the funeral or ceremony should always be asked for permission. This request may be a way of making friends with the tribesmen.

Eating and Drinking Customs

Customarily meals are cooked twice a day, in the morning before work and in the evening after work. Two meals are generally eaten, one at noon and another upon return to the village in the evening. It is at this evening meal that some rice wine may be drunk. Rhade men eat with chopsticks while the women eat with their fingers. It is considered very rude and ill-mannered for a tribesman to refuse to eat food that has been offered. Such an act is offensive to the spirits and therefore has a religious significance. Refusing to participate in a sacrificial ceremony constitutes a similar offense.[12] An outsider, however, may refuse food and drink that is offered him on the basis of his beliefs or for health reasons, but he must be consistent in his abstinence.

The basis of the Rhade diet is highland rice. They also grow and eat maize, sweet potatoes, manioc, peanuts, melons, cucumbers, cabbages, bamboo sprouts, jack-fruit, tangerines, oranges coconuts, and pawpaw. They also eat beef, venison, chicken, duck, fish, and game, including snakes, lizards, and squirrels.[13] At sacrificial ceremonies, they eat buffalo and pork.

It has been noted that rice has a very special significance for the Rhade. Its cultivation and use and the drinking of rice wine are all directly associated with their religion, and every act involving rice has a religious significance or overtone. They believe rice was a gift from their gods and, in effect, is god. Other foods gathered, caught, and grown also have spirits and consequently require certain religious actions or duties, but these duties are not as important as those required by rice.[14]

Meats and large fish are roasted or boiled while vegetables are eaten raw. Boiled meat is preserved by salting and drying. Fish is salted and may be kept for several months in jars.[15]

Although the Rhade grow many things on their land, they also gather wild plants and fruits. Many of the soups and stews they prepare contain the sprouts of young, wild plants, wild fruits, wild mushrooms, and even certain flowers. On their treks through the bush and forest the tribespeople gather everything that is edible, especially prized wild yams and wild honey.[16]

The tribespeople use traps to catch animals that attack their fields, and these animals are another source of food. Fish traps are set up in the streams and some villages place the juice of certain lianas or creepers in calm waters to drug the fish.[17] Certain of the Rhade clans have taboos associated with hunting and eating certain animals.[18]

Rice wine and water are the principal beverages. Drinking alcoholic beverages is quite common among the Rhade. By consuming large quantities of rice wine, the tribesmen become quite happy, thereby believing that the spirits are as happy as they are. The importance of alcohol to the tribesmen is indicated by the common greeting among the highlanders, *nam lu*, which means "Let's get drunk together." The Rhade consider it a friendly gesture to have an outsider drink with them, but visitors may abstain, if their refusal is both logical and courteous.

Because fresh pure water is of great significance to the Rhade, they have very strict taboos about polluting streams. The location of their villages reflects this concern about pure water; they will not settle downstream from anything they consider a source of pollution. Most of the water used is from open streams because few villages have wells.

Normally, a stream is dammed and hollow bamboo tubes are placed in the dam, forming separate streams of water. Here the Rhade bathe, draw their drinking water, and get irrigation water for the small gardens occasionally located near this water source.[19]

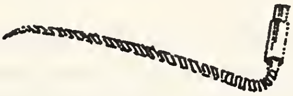


Figure 44. Rhade pipe.

The Rhade grow, process, and smoke their own tobacco. They roll their own cigars or cigarettes and smoke pipes, which play a part in sacrifice. Men are the primary smokers while women reportedly chew betel leaves and areca nuts.[20] Sometimes tobacco is added to the betel.

Customs Relating to Animals

On a varying scale, all families raise domestic animals which are generally reserved for ritual sacrifices. At night, the animals are kept under the longhouse in a fenced area. Chickens sometimes are kept in chicken houses or in cages. The Rhade do not use or need draft animals in farming.

The elephant plays an important role in the Rhade life. Sold by elephant hunters or captured by certain villages along the Srepok River, the elephant not only serves as a means of transportation, but also represents capital. Furthermore, he is a kind of talisman, supposedly having mystical ties with the clan. These ties are so strong that he is considered a part of the family and given a name.[21]

Elephants are used for heavy work such as house building. They may be rented, for about 100 piastres per day. This rental, however, varies according to the size of the task to be performed.[22] Elephants are valued at about 100,000 piastres. Upon acquisition of an elephant, the new owner prepares a sacrifice for the elephant to inform the spirits of its possession. Some of the blood of a sacrificed animal will be poured on the head of the elephant during a special rite. Sacrifices are also made in connection with the use of the elephant for special jobs, such as house construction.[23]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The life of each Rhade tribesman and tribeswoman is bound up in very complex religious beliefs.* Briefly, each person is surrounded by the good and evil spirits of all his deceased ancestors. The spirits inhabit inanimate and animate objects; they can dwell in a human body as well as in rocks, trees, and streams.

Principal Deities

The most important god is Ae Die, "Master of the Sky." He is the ruler of the universe and of all other spirits. In the past, Ae Die lived on earth with his wife and son, but when the son was killed by a centipede, Ae Die abandoned his earthly home.[1]

H'Bia Dung Dai, the sister of Ae Die, is the goddess who oversees the cultivation of rice and the ricefield, the *ray* or paddy. She is concerned with fertility and with the birth of children and their early years. She is responsible for the souls of all those who died when they were very young.

Ae Du is the husband of H'Bia Dung Dai. He is a good spirit who governs harvests and rain. He is also the spirit of cold, heat, wind, storms, and night—but only to the extent that these are beneficent. He serves as an assistant to Ae Die.[2]

The chief of the evil spirits is Yang Lie. He commands all the greatly dreaded evil spirits and the *k'sok* and *m'tao* who do lesser evils. Ae Die can intervene against the systematic and habitual malice toward humans caused by Yang Lie. If Ae Die forgets Yang Lie for a moment, Yang Lie will at once cause mischief and accidents. The Rhade represent Yang Lie in human form, his neck under a yoke, his feet fastened to a wooden block, and his head split by a saber blow.

Accidents and sudden deaths are caused by two types of evil spirits. The first type, commanded by Yang Brieng Pong and Hong Klang, includes all of the higher ranking evil spirits, which are termed collectively *yang brieng*. The second type, k'sok and m'tao, perform lesser evil acts.

Yang Brieng Pong is responsible for accidental and sudden deaths. The most dreaded of the Rhade spirits, he is responsible for deaths caused by drowning, burning, falling trees, wild animals, and all other accidental deaths. In addition, he is also responsible for deaths occurring during pregnancy, for miscarriages, and for stillbirths. After a normal delivery he can still suddenly appear and cast a spell on the baby: if he arrives ahead of the good spirits, the *yang mnut hra,* the child is slated for death.

---

* See "Customs and Taboos," p. 678.

All ceremonies held after Yang Brieng Pong has left the effects of his malevolent acts differ from other ceremonies. They are marked by a deep anguish which grips all participants; they feel his invisible presence still prowling around them. An individual on whom this accident spirit has acted is considered extremely contagious, and sacrifices must be made to purify him so that other members of the family and tribe are not endangered.

The evil partner of Yang Brieng Pong, Hong Klang, enters the corpses of all who die from accidents. He is found in the bones of a corpse, where he assumes the form of a wasp. Hong Klang literally means "wasp of the bone." People attending the funeral of anyone who has died suddenly are afraid to be in the vicinity of the grave after sunset, for fear they might be in danger of this spirit which roams near the corpse.

The word k'sok designates the imps, jinn, and little devils, who are blamed for nasty tricks. In general, they appear suddenly before the Rhade, causing severe shock, and at times, miscarriages. They assume diversified and deceptive forms. These errant spirits are invisible and live in villages, as well as deep within the forests. Their high chief is Yang Lie.

The word m'tao is almost always used in association with k'sok; it serves to designate demons and evil spirits of lower rank. The m'tao can enter the bodies of human beings to destroy them. From within the victim, they can, with the aid of a magic bellows, blow a cloud of powder that condenses into an internal ailment. They also shoot magic darts that will quickly kill their victims.

The Rhade have a degree of sympathy for these erring spirits; and even though they dread the sudden appearance of the m'tao, the tribesmen smile when the spirits leave. Their attitude toward Yang Brieng Pong and his sinister cohort, Hong Klang, however, is quite different. The tribesmen feel that the most serious dangers result when these two spirits act in concert. Therefore, every act of these spirits must be observed and precautionary measures taken through sacrificial ceremonies.[3]

In addition to these numerous spirits, the Rhade believe that a person has three souls. The *m'ngat* is the first soul which represents the individual during life and continues to represent him after death. After death, it is called *yang atao.*

The second soul, m'ngah, also called *ewa,* meaning life or breath, is the soul which after death quits the body and goes to another body to give it life. It is called yun for the short period after it has left one body and before it has entered another. The first cry of a baby is a sign that the yun has entered the body of the infant to give it life, m'ngah.

Tlang hia is the third soul, and it is represented by a bird which leaves the body at death and becomes dew. This dew is used in the infant-naming ceremony to obtain the consent of the deceased maternal aunts and uncles to use one of their names.[4]

Religious Ceremonies

The Rhade feel they have a contractual arrangement with the spirits; they must appease the spirits with continuous payments of ceremonies and sacrifices to an account which is never paid in full. The Rhade keep their payments up to date in order to avoid misfortune. When something goes wrong, such as the outbreak of an epidemic, the disaster is directly related to improper observation of religious rites.

There are no regular religious holidays among the Rhade. Ceremonies with religious significance take place when natural events, such as birth, marriage, or death occur, and at certain points in the agricultural cycle.* The rituals involved differ according to the event, and each specific ritual must follow an exact routine if the spirits are to be pleased. For most ceremonies related to a particular family, the event and the wealth of the family determine the sacrifices to be made. Likewise, the site of the ceremony will depend upon the circumstances. For example, a ceremony honoring a water spirit would be held near a spring or stream.

Religious Practitioners

Relationships between human beings and the spirits can be adjusted to a degree by rituals and ceremonial sacrifices using certain animals, rice wine in jars, other objects, and prayers to the spirits. These relationships are handled by special religious practitioners called *mjao*. Mjao can be either male or female, although in practice few are female. Observers often call them sorcerers or shamans. One of their duties is to cure illnesses which the Rhade believe are caused by the evil spirits. The mjao also protect the tribesmen from attacks by the spirit of the tree trunk, the spirit of the mole-hill, the spirit of the forest, and the spirit of the spring, all of which are evil forces. A mjao is one who, in his youth, was blessed with the favor of the spirit of the python and whose gift for healing was revealed to him by certain signs. This favor includes the ability to suck out the seed of a calabash through its peel. This gift is confirmed by dreams and is daily nourished by lessons from an experienced mjao who knows the art of magic, sacrificial ceremonies, and healing. These powers are used against those of the lesser evil spirits.

---

* See "Health," p. 662; "Marriage," p. 668; "Pregnancy, Abortion, and Birth," p. 670; "Death and Burial," p. 674; and "Economic Organization," p. 684.

Against yang brieng, on the other hand, the mjao are powerless; their only recourse is prayer and sacrifice. All prayers contain a special appeal to the dead ancestors and ask their intercession in the fight against the forces of evil.[5]

Intervening constantly in the life of the tribe, a mjao is a powerful person in the village and is usually wealthy as a result of the goods he collects for services to the sick or injured. There are, however, risks involved. If a mjao is unable to cure a sick chief or a member of the chief's family, he is accused of wrongdoing. For this he may be expelled from his village or be made to undergo some severe test to determine his guilt or innocence.

A mjao serves as a doctor, and when called on, sucks the sickness from the afflicted person. After he has sucked a certain area of the body, he produces from his mouth a small stone, piece of wood or piece of charcoal, that supposedly has been the cause of the sickness. The mjao determines what type of transgression the person has committed to cause this illness and will order a sacrifice to be offered. Sometimes, seeking a cure, a tribesman will spend all he has in sorcerer fees and prescribed sacrifices only to be told that the spirits simply want his body, and that he will therefore never recover.[6]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Rhade economy is based upon slash-and-burn agriculture. This type of agriculture is very primitive and destructive to the land, but the great fertility of the soil allows the tribesmen to survive by periodically moving their fields. The principal crop is upland or dry rice, and land under such cultivation is called a ray. The Rhade distinguish between rays: the *enah,* a first-year, newly deforested ray; the *kpuh,* one resown after the first harvest; and the *hma kpuh,* one that has been resown after successive harvests.

Usually a ray does not support more than four successive crops; it is then abandoned and called a *kso'r.* The kso'r becomes overgrown, returns to its wild state, and will not be recultivated for at least 12 years. Once the ray has been abandoned, the last cultivator has no particular preemptive right to it.[1] Rhade villages are moved from time to time as the location of the ray is determined to be too far away.

When the Rhade move to a new area, they look for a good location on virgin soil or on land that has been unused for several years. The choice of a new ray is surrounded by many superstitions and taboos.[2] The Rhade prefer fine red earth or gray earth that is not too pebbly. They normally select such level areas as they can find within the deep valleys, where springs will provide water for the villages. The presence of certain types of trees indicates the fertility of the land; their size indicates the amount of rainfall. Sometimes fields are located on slight slopes or gently rolling hills, but seldom are they located along sharp escarpments, as are those of the M'nong.[3]

Dreams play an important role in determining the location of a new ray, for the Rhade believe they indicate whether the new site will be favorable. For instance, dreams about jars, deer, wild boars, stags, tigers, panthers, pigs, horses, or monkeys are all evil omens. A dream about a small horse means rice will not grow on the new land and that the family will suffer misfortune. A monkey in a dream foretells sickness for the man clearing a new field. Dreams of chickens or birds mean turtle doves will eat the grain. A dream about water presages a fire or dry spell. However, a dream about toads or reptiles is a good sign. Dreams of births or acquisitions of buffaloes signify a good harvest.

In addition to dreams, Rhade seriously consider certain omens when they are looking for a new location for a ray. Worms or beetles in the earth and the cry of a wild goat in the area are good signs. The appearance of a python is especially favorable; even more so if a pig and three jars are sacrificed.

Certain restrictions must also be considered when the new ray is being chosen. It is forbidden to make a ray over a tomb before the ceremony of abandonment, although it is not strange to see a field planted in the midst of a cemetery once the various burial places have been ritually abandoned. On the other hand, it is a serious crime to use a ray as a place of burial for this attracts evil spirits and endangers the fertility of the soil.[4]

After the ray has been chosen, ownership must be marked: small clearings at the four corners and stakes marked with straw or bark are sufficient signs. A talisman, such as two goat's feet, may be buried in the soil to assure favorable work.

Cutting of the brush and small growth begins in September, during the period between rains known as the "little dry season," and continues into December. The first 3 days of work in the newly chosen ray are spent in silence. If the supernatural powers, in dreams or omens, do not seem to oppose the work, it can continue. Then in February and March the big trees are cut down. The trunks are cut a yard or more above the ground and left to dry. In April the fields are burned, often filling the sky with smoke and flames. After the burning of a new ray, the spirit of the ray is offered a drink to quench the thirst caused by the fire. In this ceremony, three bamboo tubes filled with water are placed on a stump and an invocation is recited.[5]

In March, a ritual planting of a special field precedes the general planting. The entire village participates in this ceremony: the men move along in rows, making holes with digging sticks; the women follow, carrying the seeds in a bamboo container.

The Rhade have three principal feast days associated with agriculture: Kam Angin, Kam Hwar, and Kam Buh. During the entire dry season, from October to about February, prevailing, dry monsoon winds, originating in the northeast, blow across the Darlac plateau in a southwesterly direction. To appease these violent winds, in February the Rhade organize a festival called Kam Angin. For this ceremony, a portico is set up east of the village, and elephant shackles are hung from the structure. The winds, compared with the power of an elephant are thus symbolically chained to limit their force. At this celebration the village chief invites the gods and all the dead souls of the village to join with the villagers in partaking of the sacrificial wine and pig. Work is forbidden—the fields cannot be burned nor the bee swarms gathered until after the ceremony. The purpose of Kam Angin is to ask the winter winds to stop so the early rains can spread over the soil before sowing, the bees can take flight, and the fields can be burned.[6] In the past, all foreigners were kept out of the village but this restriction has recently been discontinued.

About a month after Kam Angin, a second festival takes place. This is the Kam Hwar, or the ceremony to consecrate the agricultural tools. A bush representing a honey tree is planted in a small area near the wind portico and offerings, such as a winnowing basket, gongs carved from gourds, and rhinoceros hooves, are made to the spirits.[7] This is a sacrifice to bless and purify the working tools—particularly the rake—which cut into the soil; these tools must be pure so they will not make the land sterile.[8] At this ceremony, the Rhade also ask the gods' permission to clean and work the fields. A pig, a white cock, and rice wine are sacrificed to the gods. The people are told about the sacrifice in a low voice in their own houses,[9] in order to prevent boars and other wild animals who might destroy the fields from knowing about it.[10]

Finally, near the end of March, the Rhade celebrate Kam Buh, the planting ceremony. This ceremony is more spectacular than the other two, and preparations begin early in the morning. When everything is ready, and the participants and spectators have gathered, a procession leaves from the longhouse of the chief or of the po lan. Wooden statuettes, effigies of Ae Die, Master of Heaven, and his wife, H'Bia Dung Dai, a goddess of fertility and rice, are carried at the head of the procession to the ray. Behind the bearers of these, others carry a jug of water to sprinkle the gods and those carrying them. The rest, following in single file, carry crude wooden carvings, representing harmful wild animals, which will be killed in effigy. At the end of the group come the tom-tom and gongs. They proceed to the area used in all the preceding agricultural ceremonies, and it is now designated the ray of Ae Die. A miniature hut is constructed in the field and seven boiled chickens and seven jars of rice wine are offered to the spirits. Prayers are offered to Ae Die and to his wife, H'Bia Dung Dai. The tribesmen then plant the deity's field; when it is sown, Ae Die will make it rain. This is done symbolically by the participants and spectators who sprinkle the ray and each other with water. The celebrations end with drinking in the village chief's longhouse. It is a very lively ceremony.[11]

During the period in which the three celebrations, Kam Angin, Kam Hwar, and Kam Buh take place, the rays are prepared for planting. Although the surface may be leveled with a hoe, the earth is not spaded or broken up, for an implement must not break the soil before the tool has been purified and blessed.[12]

After the first weeding has been accomplished, the corn or maize planting begins in April. The area where corn is planted is simply marked off by a split bamboo shoot with a piece of cotton caught in its fork.[13] The grain reserved from the last harvest is planted in holes spaced about a meter apart. The Rhade generally do not plant an entire field with corn alone, but supplement the field with other crops. They do not use corn for fermentation.

A sham planting, to appease the deceased, precedes the actual corn planting. Along the road to the cemetery are planted corn, cucumbers, gourds, and pumpkins, and only after this ceremonial planting can corn be planted in the ray itself.

Two months after the corn has been planted, the rice is sown. Much attention is given to dreams and other signs of a fortunate harvest, and 2 or 3 days before the seeds are sown, there is a ceremony to bless them. The actual benediction takes place in the longhouses the night before the planting. Many offers are made and prayers are said. Early the following morning, the sacrifice is completed by pouring a mixture of rice wine and chicken blood over two or three pans of seed and further incantations are said.

Reportedly, the Rhade grow 10 kinds of rice. Eight of these are: *adie yuan*, used for making rice wine and relish; *mdie ana, mdie dio* (glutinous), *mdie ke* (long, yellow grain), and *mdie wiet*, used for food; *mdie hro*, fast-growing, 4-month rice, harvested in the 8th lunar month; and *mdie bla* and *mdie kit*, used for food and wine.[14]

If the planting is to be done on a new ray, the first morning begins with a sacrifice of purification—a male pig and several jars are offered on the ray. The Rhade make a simulated home, with three stones placed firmly on the ground, to attract the spirit of the earth, and place the pig's flesh and various pieces of its organs on two circles of leaves nearby. Then there is a small libation of wine mixed with blood.[15]

No one can undertake his own planting until the po lan, guardian of the land, has completed hers. She is entitled to collective labor, and her authority is never questioned.

The method of rice planting is similar to that of other mountain tribes practicing slash-and-burn agriculture. Both men and women work in the ray. Parallel lines are drawn in the ray from west to east; a man follows these lines, a stick in either hand, and pokes holes in the soil about a foot apart. They work from west to east in the ray to prevent the sun from attracting the soul of the rice. Generally, the women follow their husbands and drop the seeds into the holes, using hollow bamboo planting tubes.

As a matter of custom, it is the men who carry out the slash-and-burn operation. The women do the planting with some help from the men; both men and women weed and care for the fields. At planting time and harvest time, when the work is heavy, all members of a village work together and help each other. This reciprocity, however, does not extend to neighboring villages.[16]

As the crop grows and matures, many dangers threaten it. Insufficient rain or a hot sun can cause great harm; and, the tender shoots tempt the animals of the bush. Some rays are enclosed to keep the animals out. Numerous birds attack the ripening crop, and many kinds of traps or snares are set up to fight them. As the grain ripens from September to January, surveillance is even more important Someone almost always sleeps in the ray, and sometimes the whole family moves out to scare away the birds. Many kinds of noise-makers are used by the Rhade, some of which can be manipulated by a line from quite a distance. The Rhade believe that certain plants protect the ray. The spirit of the cactus is often invoked in prayers, although the cactus is not native to the Darlac Plateau and is relatively scarce. It is often planted in the middle of the fields; here the ceremonial first seeds are habitually sown.[17]

The farmer is obliged by custom to mark any animal traps he sets out. If he does not, he may have to make reparations to anyone who is hurt or to the relatives of anyone killed through his negligence.[18] The owner of the trap must pay the blood price with a flat gong and sacrifice a buffalo to the victim's family. If a man is wounded, the owner of the trap must pay an indemnity and sacrifice a pig to the victim's family.[19] A man who lays a trap is not responsible for accidents if he had made its presence known. A man who is wounded by a marked trap must repair the damage. If a man is killed by a marked trap, his family must make good the damage. The wounded man or the family of the dead man must sacrifice a pig to purify the earth.[20]

Although the harvest can begin before a sacrifice is actually carried out, the harvesters suspend their work for several rites and prayers. The harvesting is begun on the west side of the ray for both practical and religious reasons. During that time of year, the wind blows from the east; the uncut crop shields the workers. It is also thought that the souls of the ray will follow after the sinking sun. Therefore, the rice is cut opposite the path of the sun in order to prevent the sun from carrying away the souls of the field. The harvest can take more than a month and sometimes extends to two or three.

There are two methods of harvesting. The first, called *puot*, consists of grasping the stalk below the ear and pulling the grain

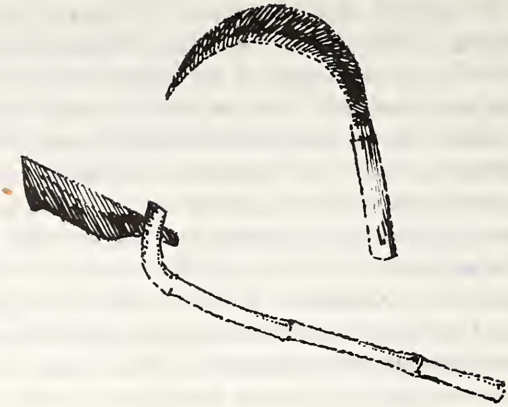


Figure 45. Rhade reaping hooks.

off in an upward motion. The grain is then put into a little basket carried on the worker's back. In the second method, called *wea,* the stalks are cut with a sickle and stacked in a semi-circle. This method is used for glutinous rice, which is cut down with several inches of stalk attached to the ear, trampled on to separate the grain from the stalk, and then carried back to the village.[21] The straw is cut off about a meter high, but is rarely used except for fertilizer for the little tobacco fields of the village[22]

Usually the rice is spread out on great round winnowing baskets in front of the longhouse to dry in the sun. The baskets are hung over the hearth of the house when it rains. The women, children, or old people frequently stir the grain to speed the drying process.

Property System

Under the Rhade social system, the women of the tribe own valuable things, like the long house, gongs, jars, and the harvest. The

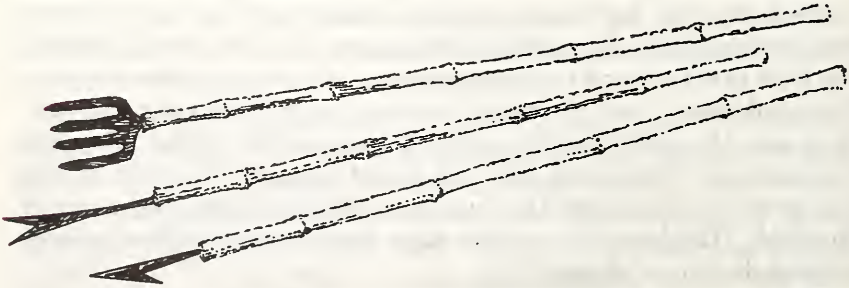


Figure 46. Rhade fishing spears.

men do not own these things, nor do they own the land. As discussed earlier, the land is owned by the clan: it is ancestral land and cannot be sold. Its use can, however, be allocated, and for each tract of land there is a hereditary guardian, or po lan. The po lan's position is one with deep religious significance because the land and its fertility are under the domain of the wife of the chief god, Ae Die.

The duties and responsibilities of the po lan are clearly prescribed by Rhade traditions. As keeper and protector of the clan's land, the po lan has no right to sell it. Nonclan people often cultivate clan land but this can be done only with the permission of the po lan.

The po lan does not need to live on the land but must periodically walk the boundaries of the land. The clan elders and the po lan know the boundaries of their land, and some of the po lan have papers attesting their ownership. The po lan, or to be exact, the clan of the po lan, must periodically prove that it is the owner of the tribal lands and has been since its first member lived on them. The po lan, as guardian of the land and the clan's representative, must recite the geographic points which are the boundaries of the tribal lands. She must recite the geneology of all the po lans who have been guardians of the land on the female side of the tribe. Such geneologies usually run about 15 generations.[23]

There has been some indication recently that the po lan system is losing its traditional function. The role of the po lan seems less important than it once was, and there is less respect for the po lan's claim to land. It has been reported that the Vietnamese Government is planning to redivide the Rhade land and give each family a determined amount with a title of ownership. Adoption of this plan would mean the end of the po lan system.[24]

Rhade traditional property law states that household objects must not be sold. A bachelor must give his goods to his mother or sisters and may not give away possessions to anyone.[25] Nothing can be bought without consultng a member of the famly,[26] and it is forbidden to buy goods from a minor.[27]

Traditional Rhade law also deals with borrowing property or material goods. If a man who borrows something refuses to return it by the agreed time, the lender can take the borrower's gongs and jars as well as the borrowed item.[28] If a borrowed item is broken, it must be replaced and, if it is a sacred jar, a fine must be paid.[29]

It is forbidden by Rhade law to enter another person's house alone. If a person enters alone and something is later discovered to be missing, he must replace it.[30]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The village is the significant political unit in Rhade society. Villages are led by a village chief and a council of elders. Although the women of the tribe control land and property, the chief is a man. He is chosen by the villagers, usually from one of their leading families, and is usually the wealthiest and most intelligent man in the village. The selection is partially based on his rank and possessions, and possibly on any power he may have over the spirits. The man chosen, however, must be approved by the village council of elders.

The chief is responsible for selecting new village sites and for the conduct of all village affairs and rituals. According to traditional law, if the village chief does not protect his people and does not see that things are well run in his village, he is guilty of a crime. His responsibility and authority do not go beyond the village.[1] There are no political leaders who speak for the entire Rhade tribe.

By traditional Rhade law, the chief has great local authority. Disobeying the chief of the village is a serious and punishable crime.[2] In practice, however, the chief's authority is very limited, and he is usually very conscious of this fact. Consequently, Rhade chiefs are not prone to take very strong actions.[3]

Officials designated by the provincial administration are the administrative functionaries throughout the Darlac Plateau. The Chief Judges of the Tribunals, although well known and enjoying great prestige, are not political figures. There also appear to be well-known sorcerers, but they appear to have no political function.

The Rhade often refer to "kings" whom they believe have considerable power. In the province of Darlac, in the district town of Ban Don, there was a man known as the King of the Rhade. Actually, he was the head of the *Tribunal Coutumier* which was held monthly in Ban Me Thuot and, while he was well known among the Rhade, he apparently had no political function.[4]

Legal System

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954, and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapproachement between the Montagnards in the highlands and the more culturally advanced Vietnamese in the coastal areas became acute. The French Government had supported a policy of permitting the Rhade and other tribes to be separate administrative entities. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam, however, has taken measures to incorporate the highlanders into the political organization of the nation.

The Rhade conception of right and wrong is based upon what is good for the tribe as a group and what is pleasing to the spirits. Justice is based on utility and objectivity, and major crimes are those that detract from the welfare of the group or clan. Misdeeds against individuals are considered minor in nature and are subject to only minor punishment. However, Rhade law upholds the strictest morality, and equivocation is punishable by exile or slavery. As could be expected with an animistic society, there is no death penalty because the spirit of the executed would haunt the living forever.

Law among the Rhade was passed down through an oral tradition. These traditional laws of the Rhade were recognized and codified by the French administration. The French felt that support of these laws would contribute to the maintenance of law and order in the Rhade area and would permit the Rhade to observe their traditions and customs. The alternative, French law, would have been disruptive to the Rhade social structure.

The Rhade law has a set code of rules for dealing with illegal practices. A person who has something stolen reports his loss to the village magistrate (usually anyone who will plead the case). The property owner requests the magistrate to go to the home of the suspected thief to confront and question him. If a judgment is made, the village chief summons the suspect to appear for trial. The trial is held in the suspect's house. If found guilty, the thief must return to the owner three of whatever was stolen. If the man or his family cannot pay the fine, he then becomes a slave of the man whose property he stole.

The traditional Rhade law covers the property system, stating that the women must keep watch over and preserve the land. The law states that "the land must never be like a horse without a master, like oxen without a guard." [5] It also states that no one owns the land, water or woods: "nobody can lay hands on them, nobody can appropriate them." [6] The land is under the guardianship of the po lan, who is responsible for the management of the tribal resources. Certain parts of the forests are considered sacred, and cutting trees in such an area is forbidden. Should trees be cut in a sacred area, great misfortune will strike the clan that inhabits the area, and the shaman must be summoned to appease the spirits.

The Rhade law covers the responsibilities of the cultivator and the animal breeder. The farmer must see that his field and gardens are fenced and must keep up the fences. It is forbidden to use the wood from the fences for firewood. Animal owners must pay a fine for any damage their animals cause to fields that are fenced, but the farmer cannot kill animals because they damaged his crops.

Rhade taboos and beliefs are also embodied in the traditional law. Thus, persons guilty of incest are punishable because such a sin endangers the crops. Such persons must pay a fine for their sin: the woman pays the po lan; the man pays the village chief.

The law also deals with inheritance and family organization in the case of death. The family property is passed down from mother to daughter, from aunt to niece, and responsibility for guarding the land is likewise inherited by the daughters and nieces. Upon the death of a family's female head, the eldest sister is considered the "mother" or head of the family.

On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate matters concerning the Rhade. In the village, the chief presided over the village court and decided the sentences. His sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district jurisdiction, and such groups handled only Rhade matters. Each group selected a president to preside over it and the court met in the house of the district chief.[7]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved by the chief were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on the written collection of Rhade customs.[8] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were Rhade tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and Rhade were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate the tribal people politically into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[9]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[10] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[11]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[12]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month depending upon the requirements.[13]

Subversive Influences

After the Geneva Conference in 1954, it was estimated that approximately 5,000 to 6,000 Rhade left the tribal villages to join the Communists. There have been reports of Rhade and Vietnamese Communist agents in the tribal villages. They gain acceptance in these villages by participating in the village activities.

The primary objective of the Viet Cong is to win the allegiance of the Rhade and to deny their support to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Generally, the subversive elements infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals.

Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong begin an intensive propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Then individuals are recruited, trained, and assigned to various Viet Cong support or combat units.[14]

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror, which usually results in passive resistance to the Government or inactive support for the Viet Cong.

While there are no signs of activities within the Rhade tribe that would indicate massive subversion by Communists or reluctance on the part of the Rhade to support actions against the Communists, it is very difficult to determine the real influence of the Viet

Cong and the real opposition thereto. Some Rhade hamlets employ a courier responsible for reporting the presence of any strangers in the village to district officials or to military units. This courier receives no pay and carries no weapon.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Word-of-mouth communication is the principal means of disseminating information. There are some transistor radios in the tribal area but not enough to make a significant contribution.

Although it had been generally assumed that the Rhade literacy rate was too low to make written information effective, one observer recently noted that many of the Viet Cong leaflets directed at the Rhade were written messages, not just illustrations.

The Rhade, when telling stories about themselves or when going about some of their ceremonies, use a method which they call "to sing." This is a kind of solo extemporaneous chant, which is extremely difficult to understand if not well versed in the language, because its manipulation is extremely deceptive. Any villager may sing, and there seems to be no training involved. The villagers are fascinated by such performances, and when someone begins to sing, they drop everything to listen.[1]

It should be noted again that the Rhade use signs on the village gates, fields, and tombs to indicate certain ideas. For example, a monkey skin hung at the entrance of a village signifies that admittance is not allowed because a religious ceremony is in progress. Although detailed information on all such practices is not available, some seem to be relatively unimportant for outsiders in the area. The Rhade do not expect outsiders to be aware of or understand all customs.

The Rhade enthusiastically contribute their energy to community projects. Therefore, information themes should indicate a picture of a Rhade helping his village. In order to obtain a Rhade's most enthusiastic response, it is necessary to appeal to his imagination.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any civic action undertaken should include, in the planning stage, particular consideration of Rhade religious and social beliefs and superstitions. It is also important that the Rhade be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. At least initially, this will require detailed consultation among village leaders, careful assurance of result, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village-oriented, the Rhade respond most favorably to ideas and suggestions for change put in terms of community betterment. Therefore, civic action proposals should stress the role of such programs in improving village life rather than stress the basis of ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote central government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness. Projects using familiar materials and products, as much as possible, are more easily accepted by the tribesmen than projects requiring the use of strange materials or devices.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion periods or have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Rhade encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative, but not all inclusive or in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Techniques to improve quality and yields of farm land.
    e. Insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operations, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach basic principles of sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    a. Provide basic literacy training.
    b. Provide basic citizenship education.
    c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

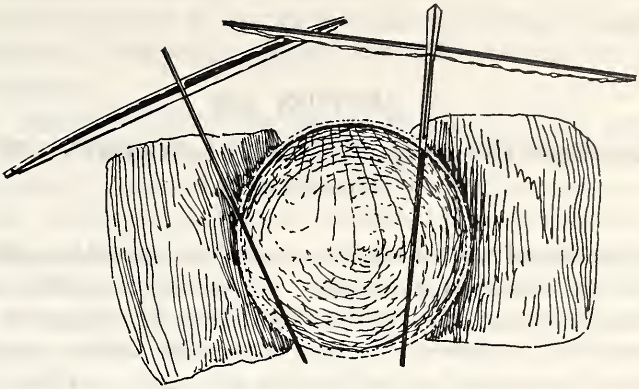
PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Rhade may be used as informers, intelligence agents, propaganda agents, labor and service forces, trackers and guides, interpreters and translators, and as self defense forces in addition to use in organized counterguerrilla combat units. Given good leadership, the paramilitary potential of the Rhade is excellent.

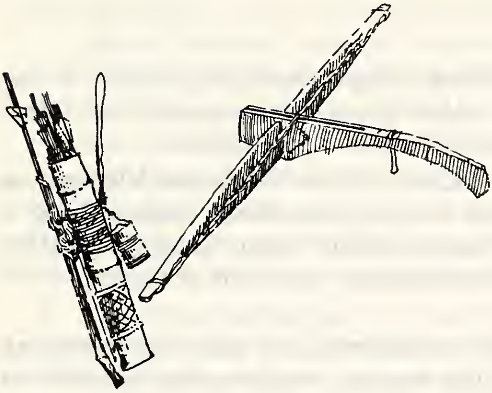
In addition to their familiarity with the local terrain and environment, the Rhade have considerable stamina and are capable of sustained, long-range, cross-country marches in this difficult terrain. They are skilled in the use of various hunting weapons, such as crossbows, knives, spears, traps, and snares; they are now trained to use modern weapons and equipment.

Rhade trained by colonial French forces are reportedly excellent soldiers. Those with French Army training are likely to be capable of sophisticated combat operations. Many Rhade have also been trained by U. S. personnel and are familiar with U. S. operation techniques as well as modern equipment.

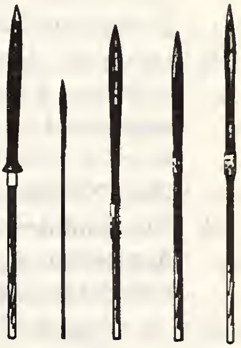
The ability of the Rhade to accept and absorb military instruction is limited to some extent by the generally low level of education. However, the factors mentioned above seem sufficiently significant to warrant attempts to develop greater receptivity to instruction.



Rhade shields and crossbows



Crossbow and quiver



Rhade spears

Figure 47. Rhade weapons.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE RHADE

Every action of the Rhade tribesman has specific significance in terms of his beliefs and religion. One must be careful to realize that the Rhade may not react as outsiders do. What an outsider may consider a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel dealing with the Rhade tribe are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Rhade village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief who will then introduce the visitor to other principal village figures.
2. Personnel living and working with the Rhade and Vietnamese together should remain strictly impartial. Establishing a degree of mutual Vietnamese-Rhade respect and cooperation is necessary for the attainment of any joint objective of the parties involved.
3. Openness, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Rhade. In this respect, promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. Tribespeople usually consider new groups of personnel obligated to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
4. The confidence of Rhade tribesmen is not gained quickly—developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
5. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience should be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
6. Projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways should be avoided whenever possible.
7. Personnel should not be surprised if the tribesmen use unexpected means to achieve a given goal. It is the end result that counts.

8. Projects and operations should be kept simple and the attention of supervisory personnel should be focused on a few manageable projects at a time.
9. Items should not be lent or given away without some form of payment. Something useful to the village should be obtained in return.
10. An individual Rhade should not be placed in the position of having to make an immediate decision of importance. An opportunity should always be provided for family consultation. If this is not done, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
11. Every effort should be made to elevate the local leaders in the eyes of the tribespeople. The local chief and his assistants should receive some credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Rhade should be treated with respect and courtesy. It is better to speak in a quiet voice than in a loud one because the Rhade consider a quiet voice more respectful and dignified.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means "savage" and is offensive to the tribesmen. Use *dong-bao-thuong* which means "compatriot of the highlands."
3. The term of address given outsiders in tribal areas is the one for "grandfather." This term is a suitable and respectful form of address for older tribesmen.
4. The Rhade establish close individual and collective friendships. These ties are usually represented by an exchange of Rhade bracelets—these bracelets should be considered a very significant sign of friendship and alliance and should not be undervalued by outsiders.
5. A Rhade offer of food or drink may be refused by an outsider as long as consistency and impartiality are displayed—i.e., after refusing Rhade rice wine, other alcoholic drinks should not be accepted.
6. A gift or an invitation to a ceremony or to enter a Rhade house may also be refused by an outsider as long as consistency and impartiality are shown.
7. Outsiders wishing to attend a Rhade ceremony, festival, or meeting should request permission from the village chief or other persons responsible for organizing the affair.
8. An outsider should never enter a Rhade house unless accompanied by a member of that house. As in other cultures, this is a question of good taste and cautious behavior—if anything

is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.

9. Outsiders should not photograph the tribesmen until sure such action will not offend them.
10. Outsiders should not get involved with Rhade women.
11. The Rhade are hypersensitive and proud. Outsiders should never be arrogant, sarcastic, or belittling in their relations with the tribesmen.
12. The Rhade are generally eager to learn—outsiders should try to help the Rhade learn new techniques, methods, and concepts but should be careful not to seriously disrupt traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Bamboo groves inside Rhade villages have religious significance for the tribesmen. This bamboo is considered sacred and should not be cut down.
2. Certain parts of the forest around a Rhade village are also sacred. Outsiders should find out where these areas are in a particular locale and should not cut or otherwise disturb trees in these areas.
3. The plants around Rhade graves should never be disturbed, because this would disturb the spirits.
4. Rhade tradition delimits the areas available for use as burial sites. Burial arrangements for Rhade and outsiders should be cleared with the tribespeople to avoid religious conflicts. Rhade fields should never be used for burials.
5. According to tradition, if a death occurs in a Rhade village, construction work is suspended until after burial. Outsiders involved in construction projects with the Rhade should make allowances for discontinuing work during these short periods of mourning.
6. Snakes have religious meaning for the Rhade and should not be killed in the tribal fields.

Living Standards and Routines

1. The fences around Rhade fields should not be disturbed—the wood from these fences should never be used for construction or for firewood.
2. The Rhade have strict rules governing the treatment of domestic animals and tribal or personal property. Generally, outsiders should treat Rhade property and village animals with the respect they would pay their own belongings. Any damage done to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from

the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission. Outsiders should never kill animals in Rhade villages.

3. When buying goods from Rhade tribespeople, outsiders should always allow time for family conferences because an individual Rhade is obliged by tradition to consult his family before selling anything.
4. The Rhade set out animal traps to protect their fields from both wild and domestic animals. These traps are marked to warn others of their location and outsiders should become familiar with the local warnings in order to avoid accidents.
5. The Rhade are extremely sensitive about water pollution. Precaution should be taken to avoid any act that might appear to endanger their supply of pure water. Often, outsiders will not be permitted to draw water for themselves but will be served by the tribesmen. Should this occur, the outsiders should not insist upon drawing water for themselves.
6. The Rhade generally dislike routine work and prefer challenging jobs. Routine tasks should be presented to the tribesmen in terms of a test.
7. The tribesmen ask for explicit instructions and close supervision for their work. Although they are generally reluctant to improvise because they fear doing something incorrectly, evidence of successful initiative should be praised.
8. The Rhade prefer to live in longhouses where the family ties can be maintained. Wherever possible, housing projects should take this preference into consideration.

Health and Welfare

1. The Rhade are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Rhade areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.
3. It may be useful in remote Rhade villages for outside medical personnel to work with the Rhade shaman or sorcerer. In many cases, the shaman welcomes such an opportunity because his status increases as his healing average "rises" due to the use of Western medicine.
4. The Rhade prefer injections to pills for medication, thinking the former more effective. When pills are used, instructions

as to their use must be carefully explained, and a large number of pills—to be administered during a several day period—should never be given to a Rhade as others in the village, regardless of their illness, may experiment with them.

5. Medical personnel must be very discreet when treating Rhade women as they are extremely shy and modest.
6. The outsider should maintain the Rhade practice of requiring that all deaths be reported immediately. This is not only useful for intelligence purposes but also for health reasons—the deceased may have been the first victim of a contagious disease that may be controlled with enough warning.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A. Maurice, and G. Proux, "L'Âme du riz," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, Special Issue, XXIX (1954), p. 30.
2. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 252.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
4. N. R. Ziemer, "Tribes of South Vietnam," Vietnam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance [Lecture, Ban Me Thuot, Republic of Vietnam], August 1964, p. 1.
5. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 47, 56.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
7. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
2. Ziemer, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
5. Donald Voth, Interview, July 1964. [Mennonite missionary in Darlac Province.]
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Henry R. Lopez, "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study" (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965).
9. Bernard Jouin, "Les Traditions des Rhade," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXV (1950), pp. 357–400.
10. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina, *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), p. 15.
11. Gerald C. Hickey, *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964), p. 29.
12. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957), p. 7.
13. Hickey, *Major Ethnic Groups, op. cit.*, pp. 28–29.
14. Donoghue, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16.
15. Hickey, *Major Ethnic Groups, op. cit.*, p. 24.
16. According to N. R. Ziemer of the Vietnam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Ban Me Thuot is a Rhade tribal name meaning Buon Ama Thuot, or, translated, "the village of the father of Thuot." The author was told by the Rhade

that the father of Thuot was a very wealthy man who owned seven elephants and had conquered that entire area. However, when the French moved into this area from Ban Don, he submitted to their rule because he was informed that his elephants were no match for the French sticks that emitted fire. Ziemer, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

17. The discussion of Me Sao is based on Hickey's account. Hickey, *Major Ethnic Groups, op. cit.*, p. 25.
18. Hickey, *Major Ethnic Groups, op. cit.*, p. 25.
19. Ziemer, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
20. Hickey, *Major Ethnic Groups, op. cit.*, pp. 25–26.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.
22. Voth, *op. cit.*
23. Henri Maître, *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909), p. 82.
24. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
25. Voth, *op. cit.*

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. L. Sabatier, *Recueil des coutumes rhades du Darlac* (Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1940), p. 105.
2. A. Maurice, "L'Habitation rhade," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, V (1942), p. 4.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
5. Voth, *op. cit.*
6. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
11. Bernard Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance en pays rhade," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXXIV (1959), p. 263.
12. Voth, *op. cit.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Voth, *op. cit.*
2. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
3. Voth, *op. cit.*
4. Donoghue, Whitney, and Ishina, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.
7. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, pp. 139–40.
8. Maître, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–72.
9. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 128–29.
12. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–29.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 131–32.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
19. Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance," *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
30. Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
31. Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance," *op. cit.*, p. 29.
32. Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
33. Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance," *op. cit.*, p. 39.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–52.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
38. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
40. Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance," *op. cit.*, p. 25.
41. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
42. Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance," *op. cit.*, p. 31.
43. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
44. Voth, *op. cit.*
45. Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance," *op. cit.*, p. 32.
46. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
47. Jouin, "Grossesse et naissance," *op. cit.*, p. 30.
48. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report, op. cit.*, p. 12.
49. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
50. A. Maurice, "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), p. 135.
51. Norman Lewis, *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), p. 121.
52. Lopez, *op. cit.*
53. Voth, *op. cit.*
54. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
55. M. H. Besnard, "Les Populations moi du Darlac," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, VII (1907), pp. 61–86.
56. Bernard Jouin, *La Mort et la tombe: L'Abandon de la tombe* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1949), p. 23.
57. Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
58. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
59. Voth, *op. cit.*
60. Jouin, *La Mort et la tombe*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Maurice, "L'Habitation rhade," *op. cit.*, p. 102.
6. Maurice and Prox, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
8. Maurice, "L'Habitation rhade," *op. cit.*, p. 98.
9. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
10. Maurice, "L'Habitation rhade," *op. cit.*, pp. 92–93.
11. Henri Baudesson, *Indochina and Its Primitive Peoples* (Translated by E. Appleby Holt. London: Hutchinson, 1919), p. 39.
12. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
13. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
14. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
16. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–44.
15. Donoghue, Whitney, and Ishina, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
18. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
19. Voth, *op. cit.*
20. Donoghue, Whitney, and Ishina, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–45.
21. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
22. Ziemer, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
23. *Ibid.*

VI. RELIGION

1. Jouin, *La Mort et la tombe*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
5. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
6. Ziemer, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–32.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–36.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–36.
8. A. Maurice, "Trois fêtes agraires rhade," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1951), p. 189.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
11. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–36.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.
14. Donoghue, Whitney, and Ishina, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
15. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–40.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–51.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
19. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
21. Maurice and Proux, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

23. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 285.
24. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report, op. cit.*, p. 14.
25. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. John D. Donoghue, "The Rhade of South Viet Nam: A Preliminary Report," *Current Anthropology*, IV (October 1963), p. 382.
2. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
3. Voth, *op. cit.*
4. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report, op. cit.*, p. 19.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
7. Donoghue, Whitney, and Ishina, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–70.
8. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report, op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.
9. Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Voth, *op. cit.*

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

No footnotes.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE RHADE

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baldwin. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Baudesson, Henri. *Indochina and Its Primitive Peoples.* Translated by E. Appleby Holt. London: Hutchinson, 1919.

Besnard, M. H. "Les Populations moi du Darlac," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* VII (1907), 61–86.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Donoghue, John D. "The Rhade of South Viet Nam: A Preliminary Report," *Current Anthropology,* IV (October 1963), 382–84.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Fall, Bernard B. *Le Probleme de l'administration des minorités ethniques au Cambodge, au Laos et dans les deux zones du Viet-Nam.* Paris: Association Internationale de Science Politique, Cinquième Congrès Mondial, September 1961.

Fischer, J. E. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1957.

"Highland Revolt 'Possibly' Viet Cong Inspired," *Saigon Daily News,* September 29, 1964, 1.

Hudgins, R. C. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Jouin, Bernard. "Enquête démographique au Darlac," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXV (1950), 281–97.

———. "Grossesse et naissance en pays rhade," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXIV (1959), 241–75.

———. *La Mort et la tombe: L'Abandon de la tombe.* Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1949.

———. "Les Traditions des Rhade," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXV (1950), 357–400.

Kerrest, J. "La Consultation du bâton (chez les Moi rhade et jarai)," *Bulletin de l'Institute Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 215–23.

LeBar, Frank M. *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Lewis, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

Long, Rev. Charles E. Interview. Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, June 5, 1964. [Mennonite missionary.]

Lopez, Henry R. "Returnee Response to Questionnaire on the Montagnard Tribal Study." Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army, Special Warfare School, January 1965.

Maître, Henri. *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois.* Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909.

Mangham, Evelyn. "Superstitions," *Jungle Frontiers,* XI (Summer 1960), 10.

Maurice, A. "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour L'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 135–39.

———. "L'Habitation rhade," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* V (1942), 87–119.

———. "Trois fêtes agraires rhade," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1951), 185–207.

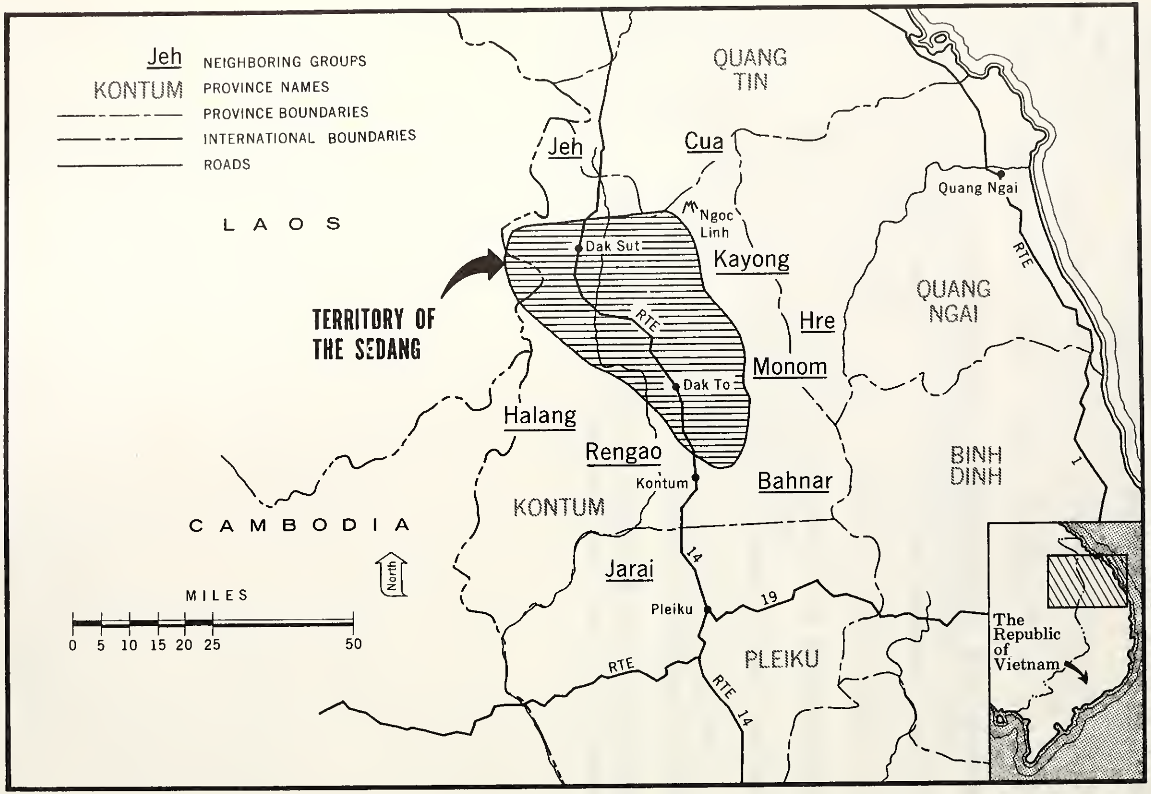
Maurice, A. and Proux, G. "L'Âme du riz," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* Special Issue, XXIX (1954), 5–134.

Sabatier, L. *Recueil des coutumes rhades du Darlac.* Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1940.

"Tribesmen Rebellion Quelled," *Saigon Daily News,* September 29, 1964, 1.

Voth, Donald. Interview. July 1964. [Mennonite missionary in Darlac Province.]

Ziemer, N. R. "Tribes of South Vietnam." Vietnam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance [Lecture, Ban Me Thuot, Republic of Vietnam], August 1964.


Jeh NEIGHBORING GROUPS
KONTUM PROVINCE NAMES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
ROADS
LAOS
TERRITORY OF THE SEDANG
CAMBODIA
North
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
QUANG TIN
Jeh
Cua
Ngoc Linh
Dak Sut
Kayong
Hre
Monom
Dak To
Halang
Rengao
Kontum
Bahnar
KONTUM
Jarai
Pleiku
PLEIKU
QUANG NGAI
Quang Ngai
BINH DINH
RTE
14
19
1
The Republic of Vietnam

The Sedang

CHAPTER 17. THE SEDANG

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Numbering between 40,000 and 80,000, the Sedang, a Mon-Khmer tribal group in the Republic of Vietnam, speak a language related to those of the Bahnar, M'nong, Halang, Hre, Stieng, and Koho tribes. The village is the basic political unit; the household, consisting of an extended family living in a longhouse, is the basic economic unit. The father is the head of the household, but kinship is reckoned on both the male and female sides of the family. The Sedang have a subsistence economy based on slash-and-burn agriculture. Their religion is animistic, involving the belief that spirits inhabit the lands, vegetation, animals, and objects around them.

The Sedang live in the area northwest of Kontum, the capital of Kontum Province and one of the larger and more important cities of the Republic of Vietnam. See the map for the location of the tribe. The first highland tribe to receive U.S. military training and equipment, the Sedang were also the first tribe to actively resist the Viet Cong.

Name, Size, and Location of Group

The Sedang have referred to themselves collectively as Ha(rh)nedea(ng).[1] Within the framework of this overall name, the tribesmen employed two additional names to indicate a geographical distinction among their tribal members; they referred to members in the eastern portion of their territory as Se-Dang, and to those in the western portions as He-Dang.[2]

A North Vietnamese source gives the size of the Sedang population as 80,000;[3] a South Vietnamese source, 57,376.[4] A missionary in 1962 reported the number as 40,000.[5] The Sedang are concentrated in the Province of Kontum, with scattered villages across the border in Laos.

The Sedang tribe is composed of a number of subgroups, each with a distinct dialect. The subgroups include the Danja, the To-drah, the Kmrang, the Duong, and the Cor or Ta-Cor. The word *to-drah* means "brush" and the To-drah subgroup is known as the "people of the sparse forest (brush)." The To-drah subgroup is located northeast of the Rengao in the mountainous region between the Psi and Bla Rivers. The word *kmrang* means "great forest," and the Kmrang subgroup is designated as the "people of the great forest." They live between the Poko and the Psi Rivers in the craggy mountains as far north as Ngoc Linh, the highest mountain in the Republic of Vietnam.

The Jeh live to the north of the Sedang. To the northeast and east the Sedang are surrounded by the Kayong and Monom who separate them from the Cua and Hre. The Bahnar live to the southeast of the Sedang. The Rengao, whose name means "borders" and who are believed to be a mixed Bahnar-Sedang tribal group, inhabit the area to the south and southeast of the Sedang, separating the Sedang from the Jarai. Southwest of the Sedang are the Halang.[6]

Terrain Analysis

The region inhabited by the Sedang is quite rugged with granite outcroppings, some of which reach 2,598 meters in height, such as the summit of Ngoc Linh.[7]

The Poko, Kan Ta, and Psi Rivers join one another in the Sedang area and flow southward to form the Sesan River, which flows south and then west into Cambodia to become a tributary of the Mekong River.[8]

The Sedang area is covered with monsoon and tropical rain forests. The monsoon forest is fairly open and easy to travel through, since there is little dense undergrowth. The monsoon forest turns brown during the dry winter season, and many of the trees lose their leaves. During the summer rainy season, when travel becomes difficult because of flooding, the elephant is a useful means of transportation.[9]

The dense tropical rain forest has three levels: The highest level is a canopy created by ancient trees from 125 to 150 feet high; the middle level has shorter trees and vines; and the lowest level is underbrush. Little grass or herbaceous vegetation grows on the forest floor. A secondary rain forest, also in the Sedang area, develops when a cleared forest area has been left uncultivated for a number of years. Here the trees are small and very close together; an abundance of vines and brush entwined around trees forms tangled thickets, making travel difficult.[10]

The climate of the Sedang area is influenced by two monsoon winds, one coming from the southwest in the summer (April to mid-September) and the other from the northeast in the winter (mid-September to March). Agriculture is greatly dependent on the summer monsoons, which bring heavy rains—up to 150 inches annually—creating local floods. Temperatures in the region are as much as 15 degrees lower than along the coastal lowland regions.

National Route 14 extends northwest from Kontum, through the Sedang area to Dak To and north to beyond Dak Sut, where it turns east to the coast at Hoi An, south of Da Nang.[11]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

The Sedang are classified with the Mon-Khmer ethnic grouping in terms of language, customs, and physical appearance. As such, they are related to the Bahnar, the Stieng, the M'nong, the Halang, the Hre, the Bru, the Katu, the Jeh, the Cua, and the Koho groups.[1]

The Mon-Khmer ethnic grouping is generally believed to have originated in the upper Mekong valleys, whence these peoples migrated in many directions.[2] The Sedang represent a people derived from that stock, but specific details of this relationship are not available at this time.

Language

The Sedang language belongs to the Bahnaric group of the Mon-Khmer language.[3] Linguistically, the Sedang tribe is distinguished by numerous variations of dialect, each of which is ridiculed by members of other dialect groupings. At the borders of an area where a dialect is spoken, it merges gradually into adjoining dialects.[4]

In 1963, a Protestant missionary group was reportedly devising a written form for the Sedang language.[5] However, neither the current status of their work, nor the earlier linguistic activities of Roman Catholic missionaries are known. Some Sedang understand the language of the neighboring Jeh. The only Sedang able to read and write are the few who learned Vietnamese or French by attending government schools. The Sedang greatly admire people who can read and write.[6]

Legendary History

The Sedang, like all the Montagnard tribal peoples, have legends that deal with the creation of the earth, the flood, and the activities of legendary heroes. These legends, recounted in poetic language, provide entertainment for the tribesmen during their leisure time. The legends are passed orally from generation to generation and are part of the large body of oral tradition which includes the laws and precepts known by all the Sedang tribespeople.[7] Specific examples of Sedang legends were not available at this writing.

Factual History

During the period of instability (from about 1859 to 1885), while the French were consolidating their power in Indochina, anarchy tended to increase among the mountain tribes. The Sedang intensified their raids on their less warlike neighbors.[8]

For a very brief time (1888–1890), a soldier-adventurer, David Mayrena, with the backing of the French administration and the assistance of the established Catholic missionaries, was able to form a loose confederation of the Bahnar-Rengao-Sedang tribes. The confederation did not survive Mayrena's departure from the Central Highlands.

After 1893, the French made little attempt to control the more independent tribes: the Sedang, Rhade, Jarai, and M'nong. Left to their own devices in their mountain isolation, the tribes became increasingly lawless. Raids and attacks against convoys and billets of Indochinese soldiers became common, leading, in turn, to the expansion of the French occupation of the mountain areas and the pacification of the tribes.[9]

Settlement Patterns

Sedang villages vary in size from 3 to 20 longhouses and usually center around a large common house. During periods of peace, the common house is used as the ritual center of the village and as the sleeping quarters for the unmarried young men. During periods of war, the common house serves as the traditional mobilization center for defense of the village. Sedang villages also have a miniature spirit house reserved for visiting spirits. Prior to French pacification, stockades were erected around the villages.[10]

The Sedang define a village as a group of houses receiving their water from the same water duct—water is brought into villages from its source through bamboo ducts. When a group of houses is served by two ducts, then the Sedang consider the group to be two villages and give each its own name.[11]

The Sedang live in longhouses, each shared by many members of the same family—as many as 100 people may live in the same longhouse.[12] These longhouses are built above the ground on pilings, although where the site slopes, one side of the house may rest on the ground. All houses have an entrance at each end, with one end having a platform where rice is pounded.[13] The Sedang longhouse is reached by a detachable ladder. During the day when the house is empty or the men absent, the ladder is lowered; at night, when all occupants have returned home, the ladder is lifted onto the platform.[14]

The slightly inclined roof of the longhouse is made of bamboo tiles split in half lengthwise and placed in two layers, one layer cornering the other.

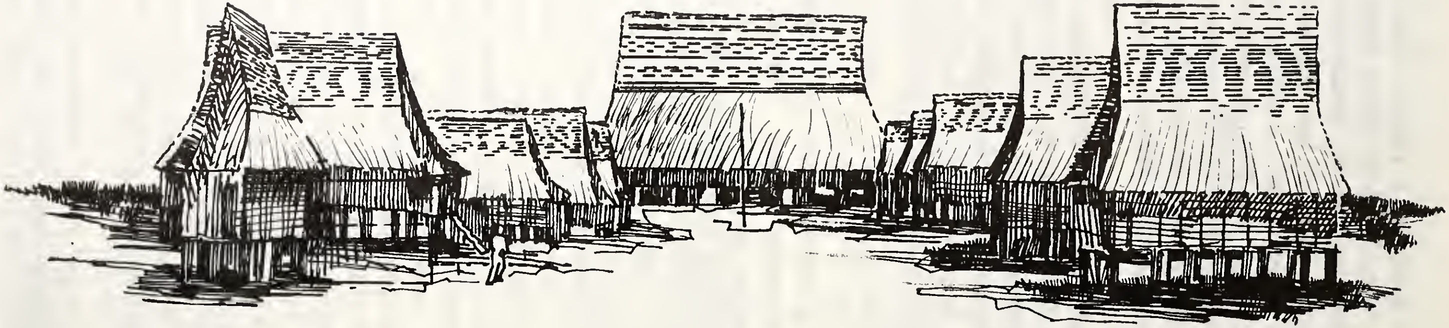


Figure 48. Layout of Sedang village.

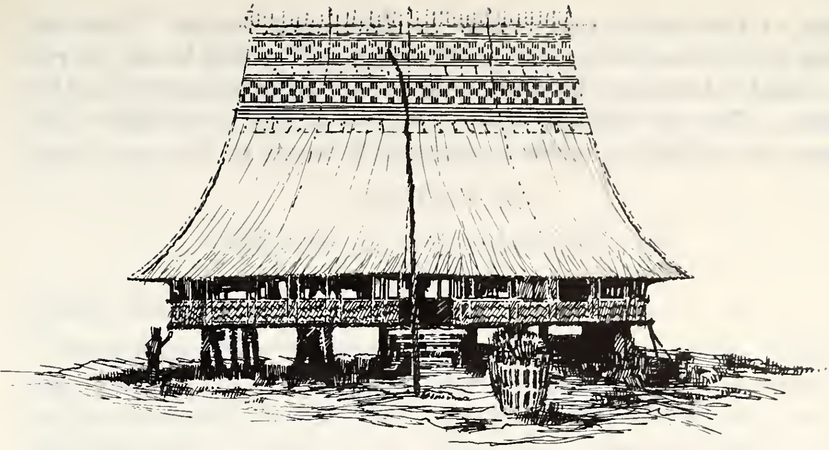


Figure 49. Sedang communal house.

The interior of the longhouse is divided into compartments by partitions of plaited bamboo.[15] A common room at one end of the house contains the hearth or "soul fireplace" *(mahua pla)*, believed to be the residence of the tribesmen's soul. Closely related groups within the larger family unit occupy separate compartments.[16]

Customarily, the interior of the Sedang longhouse is divided into two parts, the upper and the lower. In the upper half live the house chief *(kan hngii)* and his wife *(tyin)* or wives, or his oldest daughter. This is the only part of the house where rice may be cooked, for the Sedang believe this area is the home of the rice soul or *mahua phae*. In this upper half of the house, each nuclear family may have its own hearth on which to cook rice, and the

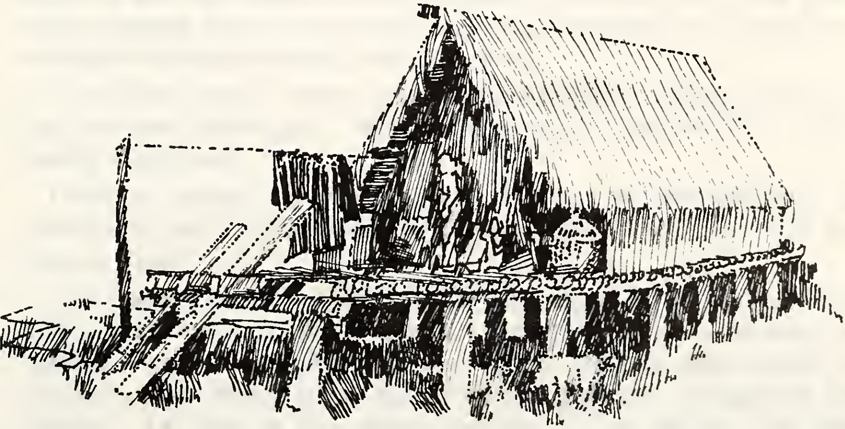


Figure 50. Sedang house.

souls of the family may reside in their own hearth. However, since no rice may be cooked in the lower half of the house, all rice is cooked in the upper level and is then carried to the lower level for eating. The rice souls of those who live in the lower half of the house are believed to reside in the chief's hearth on the upper level.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Sedang show considerable variation in appearance. Generally, however, they are short—5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 6 inches in height—and well muscled, with smooth reddish-brown skin, varying from dark to light shades. Their hair is long and black and is worn, by both men and women, in a chignon on the back of the head. The chignon is fastened in place with long strands of colored beads which are also wound around the head. The Sedang women have long bangs; their earlobes are pierced for wearing pieces of bent metal. Some Sedang tattoo three dots on either side of the mouth.[1]

Formerly, upon reaching adolescence, many Sedang filed their teeth and lacquered them black. Now this custom is dying out.[2]

Health

Many diseases in the Sedang area are insect-borne—carried by the anopheles mosquito, the rat flea, and the louse. Some diseases are caused by hookworms, some by poor sanitary conditions and inadequate sexual hygiene.[3]

Malaria is a common disease in the area; most tribespeople have contracted it at least once in their lives. The two common types of malaria are the benign tertian malaria, which causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal, and malignant tertian malaria, which is fatal.[4]

The three types of typhus found in the tribal areas are carried by lice, rat fleas, and mites. Mite-borne typhus is reportedly rampant among the tribes.[5]

Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, yaws, leprosy, venereal disease, tuberculosis, and various parasitic infestations are also found in the Sedang area.[6]

The Sedang believe that disease is caused by the activities of evil spirits and that only spirits can cure illnesses. To cure disease, the Sedang resort to sorcerers or shamans who determine, through divination, how many blood sacrifices are required to appease the spirits. As soon as the proper sacrifice to the spirits has been made, the Sedang believe that the sick person will recover. The

Sedang also believe a sorcerer may cure illness from a distance with only a piece of clothing belonging to the patient.[7]

Reportedly, during an outbreak of smallpox, the Sedang of Kon-Krok visited contaminated villages for rice and salt. Because they entered and left the village during the night when the spirit of the smallpox was sleeping and could not see them, they thought themselves safe. When they did contract smallpox, they sought a sorcerer's aid.

Father Guerlach, an early French Catholic missionary in the area, had vaccine to innoculate the Sedang, but was denied access to their villages because the Sedang did not believe in Western medicine. Even the stream beds in the Sedang territory were covered with small bamboo lances to prevent his approach.[8] Guerlach reported that he met considerable resistance in his attempts to provide medical treatment to the tribesmen.

In many villages, killing lepers was common practice in the past. However, from time to time, powerful families were able to prevent the elimination of afflicted relatives; as a result, leper colonies were established; one still exists in Sedang back country.[9]

The Sedang once killed deformed children in the belief that they had a religious obligation to prevent the survival of "evil monsters." [10]

Endurance

According to an early report of Father Guerlach, the Sedang tribesman could travel quickly and for long periods of time in the mountains, but tired easily in the plains.[11]

Psychological Characteristics

The Sedang are reported to be intelligent and to have a capacity for abstract thought. The anthropologist Devereaux, simply with the aid of a candle, was able to explain the Copernican system relating to the movement of the earth around the sun, the phases of the moon, and the movement of the planets to a 17-year-old Sedang girl.[12] Sedang tribesmen also told Devereaux that the quantity of numbers and fractions was infinite, and that one could count or divide them forever.

The Sedang are aware of the value of schooling and literacy They envy and admire people who can read and write.

The Sedang tribesman does not think of himself as an individual, but identifies himself in terms of his village. When asked, "Who are you?" he will answer, "I am from———village." [13] Only when he violates taboos and custom is a Sedang an individual. When a Sedang is observing custom, he is doing so not as an individual but as a part of the village. A tribesman who persistently flouts custom —for example, by living incestuously with his sister—can be ostracized from his soul hearth (mahua pla) and driven from the village into the forest, where antisocial behavior may be continued without interference. Ostracism to the forest is a mixed blessing, for culprits often accumulate much wealth there, since in the forest they are not obligated to offer sacrifices or pay fines. When the culprits are able to pay their fines, they return to the village and humiliate everyone with their affluence.[14]

The Sedang believe that they live in a hostile universe, where their gods and the spirits of their ancestors decree severe punishment for any offense. As a result, the Sedang are defiant and quarrelsome, taking advantage of anyone weaker than themselves.[15]

The Sedang are an artistic people; many are talented musicians, while others are gifted in the decorative arts—decorative weaving and basketmaking. They also apparently have some inherent mechanical ability, as they quickly learn to operate and repair mechanical devices.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Among the Sedang, society is organized around the longhouse, the extended family, and the village. The village is the basic political unit; the longhouse, or household, made up of a number of related nuclear families, is the basic agricultural unit.* A single extended family usually lives in each longhouse, although the family may be so large that it requires two or three houses. Likewise, the head of the household is usually the head of the extended family. But where the family is so large that it inhabits more than one house, there are two or three household chiefs, although there is still only one extended family head. The father is the head of the nuclear family, but kinship is reckoned on both the father's and mother's side. Intermediaries make marriage arrangements. Marriage between close blood relatives is prohibited.[1]

Kinship System

The Sedang have a bilateral kinship system, that is, family relationships are reckoned on both the male and female sides of the line. Upon marriage the young couple may go to live in the house of either the groom's family or the bride's family.[2]

Here is a list of terms the Sedang use for various members of the kin group: [3]

Father	*pa*
Mother	*no*
Father's elder brother	*taa*
Father's younger brother	*taa*
Father's elder sister	*meh*
Father's younger sister	*mie*
Mother's elder brother	*mie* (woman's side) *meh* (man' side)
Mother's younger brother	*mie* (woman's side)
Mother's elder sister	*cya* (woman's side) *meh* (man' side)

---

* See "Economic Organization," p. 744.

Mother's younger sister	*cya* (woman's side) *mie* (man' side)
Elder sister	*na*
Elder brother	*tao* (woman's side) *na* (man's side)
Younger sister	*a*
Parallel cousins	Same as for brothers and sisters
Cross cousins	*mae*

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

Among the Sedang, the father is the head of the nuclear family. There are a few cases of polygamy among rich Sedang, but even wealthy tribesmen usually have only two or three wives.[4]

The Sedang husband is responsible for the payment of damages incurred by his wife. The wife's family is liable only if the husband cannot meet his obligations. A Sedang wife is not responsible for her husband's debts; however, she usually helps him, if only partially.[5]

The men hunt and contribute the game to the household, while the women clothe the family by weaving the China grass from their gardens.[6]

Both men and women participate in agricultural activities. Men prepare the fields and make the holes with digging sticks. Women plant the seeds, and the whole household group participates in the harvest. Women also cook, weave, and care for the children and the domestic animals. Basketry and any woodworking are exclusively male functions. Young boys usually are responsible for herding the buffaloes.

Marriage

During childhood and adolescence, lovemaking short of actual sexual intercourse is permissible. A couple guilty of premarital intercourse is fined one pig by the village. Marriages are often contracted to permit cohabitation without the penalty of a fine.

The boy initiates marriage negotiations through his parents and an intermediary. The parents give a feast to announce the engagement, and the couple drink from the same jar of rice wine, a ceremony formalizing the contract before the spirits.[7]

The engagement is announced publicly with an exchange of necklaces. Engagements may be broken by mutual agreement without the payment of an indemnity or a ritual ceremony. If one party desires to end the engagement, he or she must pay a small indemnity and sacrifice a chicken. If, however, the agreement is cancelled because of the misbehavior of one of the parties, the complainant need not pay an idemnity or make a sacrifice.[8]

Marriage is prohibited between close lineal relatives, such as brother and sister, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. In addition, marriage is banned between an individual and a stepparent and between first cousins.[9] If a Sedang wishes to marry one of his in-laws or the spouse of his deceased mother or father, he must perform a ritual purification ceremony to the spirits.[10]

After the marriage ceremony, the couple may live in the house of the parents of either the bride or the groom. If they move into the house of the bride's parents, the groom must make a ritual payment to her family. If the young couple moves into the house of the groom's parents, the same payment must be made by the bride.[11]

Should a young couple desire to move from the house of the groom's parents to the house of the bride's parents or vice versa, they must make a sacrifice so that the power of the rice soul* of the first house will not be diminished by their departure. The Sedang believe that an animal sacrifice will augment the strength of the rice soul of the house.[12]

A Sedang may take a second wife if he wishes, a custom prevalent among only the very wealthy tribesmen. First, permission must be obtained from his first wife, who may divorce him if she does not agree to the second marriage. More often than not, the first wife accepts the second wife, receiving an indemnity payment from her husband. The first wife usually treats the second wife as an inferior or as a servant.[13]

Birth

Birth occurs outdoors. The woman kneels over a shallow hole dug in the ground, grasping a bamboo pole for leverage and support. Another woman may assist the mother. After the baby is born, they bury the afterbirth before cutting the umbilical cord.

A child is not suckled immediately after it is born, since it must be decided whether or not he is to live. The Sedang do not consider a child as being alive during this time. In the past, if babies had some physical defect or were illegitimate, they could be killed.[14] However, if the villagers discovered the infanticide, a fine had to be paid to the village.[15]

The Sedang cause abortions by hitting the abdomen of the pregnant woman with their hands. No stones are used for fear the result would be fatal. There are said to be old women in the tribe who can cause a woman to abort by merely touching her abdomen.

The Sedang believe that drinking hot water will dissolve the fetus and wash it out of the woman, thus producing an abortion.

---

* See "Religion," p. 741.

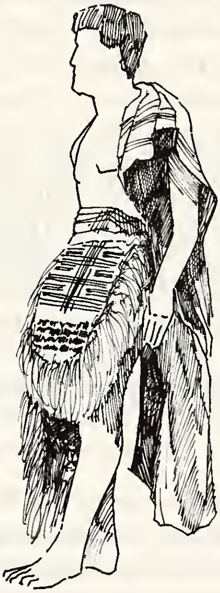


Figure 51. Sedang tribesman in ceremonial dress.

When discovered by the villagers, abortion is penalized by the payment of a fine to the village.[16]

Child-Rearing Practices

Sedang children are given various responsibilities. Small boys, 3 or 4 years old, watch buffaloes and other animals. Little girls carry water, help with the cleaning, and care for their younger brothers and sisters. The children are disciplined from an early age. Punishments include rubbing pepper in the eyes, in the vagina, or under the foreskin of the penis.[17]

At the age of 6, boys may enter the common house to sleep every night, returning to their respective longhouses for meals. In the common house, the boys learn to be men; they are taught to hunt and fight, as well as other skills expected of males.[18]

Puberty Rite

In the past, at puberty, young men and women had their front teeth filed down and lacquered black. The young person's parents gave permission for the performance of the operation. The upper teeth were filed with a piece of basaltic rock, while the lower teeth were protected by a piece of wood. It was considered unlucky for a tooth to break during the operation. Following the operation, the mouth was washed out, and the teeth coated with a lacquer which turned the teeth black. The lacquer was derived from the following plants: the *krae, long thang, long hrap, long hot,* and *long nghik nheng.*[19]

This practice of filing and lacquering the front teeth is now apparently dying out.

Death and Burial

Unlike many other tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam, the Sedang have relatively simple burial customs. After a waiting period of 20 to 30 hours following death, the body is taken to the grave where it is buried with appropriate religious ceremonies involving the sacrifice of animals.

Because they believe that the soul leaves the body about 6 days after death and is no longer present in the area of the grave, the Sedang do not visit the grave again or perform additional sacrifices for the deceased.[20]

Widows are prohibited from remarrying for a particular period of time after the death of their spouses. A widow who remarries after 9 to 12 months must sacrifice a pig at her husband's grave.[21]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

The Sedang have many customs and taboos associated with their fear of offending the spirits. These are established by tradition, and each tribesman knows and attempts to observe them. Some customs and taboos may vary from village to village. Tribesmen in regular contact with outside influences may not observe their customs and taboos as closely as tribesmen living in greater isolation.

Dress

Generally, Sedang men wear a loincloth, and the women wear only a skirt that reaches almost to their knees. For protection against the cold, an additional blanket-like garment of locally woven material is wrapped around the shoulders by both sexes. The material of this garment has stripes and various border designs.

Sedang women wear strings of colored beads wound around head and neck. In their pierced earlobes, they wear metal loops or dangling pieces of metal. The tribesmen wear baskets or woven bags on their backs to carry articles.[1]

Folk Beliefs

The Sedang live in constant awareness, and often dread, of the supernatural world, where nothing happens by chance, and where every bit of good luck, every success, every failure, every dream, and every accident is a sign from the spirits. Since everything means something, much of a Sedang's life is taken up with discovering and/or interpreting the meaning of everything that goes on about him. Still more time is spent in attempts to ward off misfortune, to placate angry spirits, and to keep the favor of the more friendly spirits. In short, the life of the Sedang is continually overshadowed by an invisible world that, for the most part, is hostile.

There are certain actions which a Sedang must not commit in order to remain in harmony with the spirits. The Sedang will not engage in trade when about to build a house, as this would tempt an adverse reaction from the spirits. Another interdiction forbids a man to take a meal in his own house shortly after eating at the common house.[2]

Before building his house, a Sedang tribesman goes alone to a previously selected spot and places seven grains of rice on a banana leaf held on the ground by a piece of wood. If the grains of rice are undisturbed on his return the following morning, the signs are favorable for his building the house and for the ricefields to flourish. If, however, the rice has been disturbed, he must select a new site and go through the same ritual until the signs are favorable.[3]

Some local taboos against specific activities vary from village to village. For example, one village may have a taboo against making pottery, while a neighboring village does not.[4]

Violations of taboos connected with agriculture (such as those pertaining to rice) and certain breaches of taboos involving the desecration of the house are remedied by the collective action of the members of the house, and may necessitate sacrifices to placate the offended spirits.[5]

Breaches of other taboos by any of the tribe may bring reprisals upon the entire village. Incest and secret premarital intercourse are believed to result in the burning of the entire village by the spirits. The guilty parties must offer up sacrifices to placate the angered spirits and to strengthen the power of the rice souls of the hearths of the village* which these violations have weakened.[6]

Eating and Drinking Customs

Rice, the staple of the Sedang diet, is supplemented by various vegetables, game, and fish. Although chickens, goats, pigs, and buffaloes are raised primarily for sacrificial purposes, the meat of the sacrificed animal is eaten following the ceremony. The Sedang follow traditional methods of cooking and preparing foods to avoid offending the spirits involved in the particular activities.

Rice wine is prepared by the women according to traditional techniques handed down from generation to generation. The drinking of rice wine is an integral part of religious rituals and is considered a sacred act. Tradition also dictates the manner in which the rice wine is served and drunk.

Specific details dealing with the traditional Sedang methods for preparing and consuming food and drink were not available at this writing.

Customs Relating to Animals

The Sedang believe that to see a snake suddenly on the path when returning from a trip signifies future misfortune, but to encounter a snake when setting out on a trip means nothing. When a roebuck crosses a tribesman's path, this is an unfavorable sign. A bird singing on the right or left of the trail is a bad omen, but a bird singing in front or behind the tribesman on the trail is a good omen.[7]

---

* See "Religion," p. 741.

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Sedang view the arrival of a stranger with reserve and caution: they will receive him hospitably but will observe him closely to determine his motives in their village. The tribesmen are also concerned about the reaction of the spirits to the stranger; they will watch for any signs that might indicate that the presence of the outsider offends the spirits. Although an outsider with no known affiliation may be in danger in a Sedang village if he breaks a tribal taboo, an outsider who represents a powerful group will not be harmed. Observance of local taboos by an outsider generally helps win the confidence of the tribesmen, but the Sedang do not expect outsiders to know and observe all their customs.

Customs Relating to Warfare

The Sedang consider raids on other tribes permissible, but intratribal raids are permitted only to avenge an injury.[8] Rarely does a Sedang war party attack a village directly, preferring instead to seize men, women, and children who are farming ricefields some distance from their village.[9] If the Sedang do storm a village, they rush in and slaughter all of the old men, considered useless as prisoners, and anyone else offering resistance. They then hastily retreat to avoid being cut off by possible reinforcements.

While the Sedang women do not participate in actual warfare, they are expected to do all of the men's work while the men are fighting. Women also assist in preparing the village defenses, such as planting sharpened bamboo spikes in paths leading to the village.[10]

A fixed ritual in the common house always precedes an attack against another village. A chief cuts a special root into three pieces, places the roots on the blade of his sword, and lets them fall one by one on his shield with a religious invocation. If the roots land in a prescribed position, the attackers will be invincible. Then the warrior considered by the village to be the bravest rises and asks the spirits for success, explaining the reasons for the war. He then leads the attack, running through the woods followed by the other warriors armed with shields, crossbows, swords, and lances. This war leader is usually not the village headman, who is normally an older man.

Each warrior wears his best belt and a piece of blue or white cloth across his chest; his only rations are enough rice and tobacco for 2 or 3 days. Sometimes, the warriors break up into several bands and travel separately, meeting at predetermined rendezvous points. En route, they listen attentively to every noise from the woods. If the birds are singing and no mice are on the trails, the warriors consider the operation progressing to the satisfaction of the spirits. A bird of prey circling overhead is an omen of much booty.[11]

After a successful expedition, the Sedang return to their own village and immediately sacrifice a goat and drink wine to the accompaniment of drums and a monotonous blowing of a buffalo horn.[12]

Later, to celebrate the victory, there is a public feast, which is announced 15 days in advance by the young people, who march around the common house every night beating drums. Buffaloes equal in number to the captured prisoners are offered for sacrifice. For a day and a night before the feast, the buffaloes are staked out in the center of the village, while the villagers dance around them drinking many jars of wine.[13]

At daybreak of the feast day, in a ceremony known as *rolanq,* the young men take up their weapons against the buffaloes who symbolize the defeated enemy. First the men shoot the animals with arrows, then they attack them with swords, cutting at the beasts' legs until they fall to the ground; and finally they kill the animals with lances. The meat is then cut up and roasted; the villagers feast until dawn of the next day.

After the victory feast, a peace ritual between the warring villages is conducted through intermediaries. Two elders from the villages involved, a man from one village and a woman* from the other, meet in the victor's common house to undertake the negotiations. Each elder cuts a finger, and the blood of each is mingled in a cup. With the proper religious invocation, each drinks from the cup. A few days later, this same ritual is repeated in the other village,[14] thus formalizing the vows of the villages to live in peace.

---

* An exception to the rule: "No women are permitted in the communal house."

SECTION VI

RELIGION

Religion dominates every aspect of Sedang life. The Sedang religion is animistic and involves the belief that gods or spirits inhabit the lands, animals, trees, and objects. There are good and evil spirits, spirits of the deceased, and ghosts. Sacrifices are offered to placate spirits who have been offended by taboo violations and to insure the fertility of soil and an abundant harvest.

Principal Spirits and Rituals

Among the Sedang, good spirits are called *yang* and bad spirits *kia*. Spirits may be classified according to their nature, residence, and duties. Generally, spirits go in pairs—for example, the fundamental pair of yang and kia. Each yang spirit represents some aspect of good, and each kia spirit represents some aspect of evil. The Sedang attribute to the bad spirits all misfortunes, such as crop failure, sickness, and death.[1]

There are spirits of the sun, the moon, the sky, and the earth. The spirit of the sun represents fertility, and the spirit of the moon represents the rhythms of life—the calendar, vegetation, and the crops. The spirit of the sky is connected with agrarian rites; the spirit of the earth is associated with the growth and generation of living things. The most powerful Sedang spirits are Grandfather and Grandmother Kanda, the creators of the world. Also important are the thunder gods, the *tara,* who are associated with warfare.[2]

There are also the spirits who inhabit all surrounding things, such as rocks, trees, buildings, tools, and rice. Each spirit plays a part in the considerations of the tribesmen.[3]

The Sedang believe that the fertility of their dry-ricefields is related to the power or strength of the rice soul (mahua phae) of the cultivator's house. If the rice soul is strong, the fields will be fertile; if it is weak, the crops will be poor. The strength of the rice soul can be increased by the performance of religious rituals by the household chief's wife (tyin), for the tribesmen believe that the rice soul resides in her cooking hearth.

The sacrifice of a buffalo at planting time greatly strengthens the rice soul of a particular house and benefits the fields belonging to the house. Other households of the village are invited to the sacrificial ceremony and feast, and share in the benefits of the buffalo sacrifice. The skulls of sacrificed buffaloes are kept in the house to maintain the strength of its rice soul. Only the cultivation of dry rice is considered a sacred activity subject to religious requirements; there are no rites involved in the cultivation of kitchen gardens and wet rice.[4]

At one time the Sedang offered a human sacrifice whenever a common house was built. A living man was put in the hole dug dug for a heavy column. After the column was placed in position, crushing the man, dirt was packed around it, completing the construction. Such sacrifices were believed to please the spirits and bring strength and protection to the village and the common house. During the past 150 years there have been no reports of human sacrifices among the Sedang.[5]

Sedang sacrifices vary with the particular ceremony or with the gravity of the taboo violation. The sacrifices range from an offering of a chicken and a little rice wine to the sacrifice of buffaloes and large jars of rice wine. Between these extremes varying numbers of pigs and other animals may be sacrificed.

The ceremony itself consists of prayers to the particular spirit or spirits being honored, the ceremonial slaughter of one or more animals, and the drinking of rice wine by those attending the ceremony.

Religious Practitioners

The Sedang religious practitioners are the tyin and sorcerers *(bojau)*. Since the basic Sedang agricultural unit is the household, which collectively cultivates and owns its sacred dry-ricefields, and since the rice soul is believed to live in the hearth of the household chief, the chief's wife or tyin, is considered a religious leader. The tyin is responsible for sacrifices held in connection with clearing the fields, planting, and harvesting, that are designed to insure that the power of the rice soul will be strengthened and the crops abundant. Failure of the crops is considered a tragedy, as the Sedang believe crop failures result from a weakening of the rice soul. If sacrifices by the tyin do not strengthen the rice soul, the house chooses another tyin.[6]

The chief functions of the sorcerers or bojau are the determination by means of divination, of the causes of misfortune or sickness and the designation of appropriate sacrifices to mollify the spirits.[7]

Divination by sorcerers involves the use of dice and snails.

When a question is asked of the spirits, the dice are thrown, revealing the answer by the way in which they fall. Snails are used to foretell the outcome of military questions. Two rows of snails—six in one row and five in the other—face each other; the row moving into the other signifies the victorious group.[8]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Sedang have a subsistence agricultural economy based on the slash-and-burn cultivation of rice. The slash-and-burn technique of the Sedang involves the clearing of land by cutting and burning the original vegetation, using the ashes as fertilizer, cultivating the land for approximately 3 years until it is exhausted, and then allowing the land to lie fallow, for as long as 8 years. When forest growth has re-covered the land and the soil has revitalized itself, the land is once again cleared and cultivated.

During the dry season the clearing is done: brush and trees are cut down and allowed to lie where they fall while the sun dries them thoroughly. When dried sufficiently, the brush and trees are burned under prescribed conditions to prevent the spread of fire. When a burnt field has cooled, most of the debris is cleared away, leaving only large boulders and tree stumps. Before sowing, the remaining charred debris is collected into small piles and burned again. The resulting layer of ash in the field is subsequently washed into the soil by the rain. As the rainy season starts, sowing begins. The men go through the field making holes in the ground with dibble sticks. Women follow, placing seeds in the holes, and tamping earth over the seed. At maturity, the crop is harvested and stored within the houses.

The household is the basic and most important economic unit among the Sedang. Land for the cultivation of rice is owned collectively by the members of the household and is administered by the household chief with the assistance of his wife, who performs the religious agricultural rituals. Individual nuclear families may own their own land, but dry rice is not cultivated in these fields.[1]

The Sedang have two types of cultivated land: dry-rice fields and all other fields. Dry-rice fields *(tyek)* are owned by the households and tilled collectively. Considered sacred, they require agricultural rituals to insure their fertility; under the leadership of the tyin, every member of the household participates in these ceremonies.

In other fields, not considered sacred, corn, vegetables, and a limited amount of wet rice are cultivated. Such fields are owned by individuals and nuclear families. The methods of cultivating each type of land are the same—except in the case of wet-rice paddies which are necessarily planted in bottomland along water courses.[2]

Secondary crops grown by the Sedang include corn, millet, various garden vegetables, a small amount of tobacco, and ramie or China grass. The Sedang also keep domesticated animals.

Special Arts and Skills

Sedang men are skilled hunters and fishermen. They are also proficient at basket weaving. Ironworking, a skill restricted to men, produces swords, hatchets, hoes, picks, and spear points. Skilled ironworkers are believed by the Sedang to have special spiritual powers.

Trade

The Sedang trade with Vietnamese peddlers who travel through their area. The Vietnamese also employ some Sedang tribesmen as middlemen, who trade on behalf of the members of their villages. Individual tribesmen may also go to town and trade directly with the shopkeepers there. The Sedang trade baskets, cloth, lances, and sabers for salt, clothing, and various metal goods.[3]

Property System

The Sedang village is considered the collective owner of all uncleared land in its area, while households and nuclear families hold title to cleared and fallow land. The village must give permission to clear new land or to rent or sell land.[4]

Sedang households and individuals—both men and women—may own both real and personal property. The household group owns the dry-rice land and cattle. The men are responsible for debts and damages incurred by members of their nuclear families, but a Sedang wife is not liable for debts or damages incurred by her husband. Men and women have an equal right to own property and to conserve the fruits of their labor.[5]

After marriage each spouse retains possession of the personal property *(tomam kodih)* which he or she brought to the marriage. However, property acquired after marriage as a result of a couple's joint effort is known as common property *(tomam atum)* and is jointly administered. When a household chief dies, his share of common property is managed by the next senior member of the extended family.[6]

When a spouse dies, the burial expenses are taken from his personal property, and the remainder is divided among the descendants or other blood relatives of the deceased. Common property is divided in half, the surviving spouse receiving one half, while the other half is divided among his blood relatives. Children generally inherit equal shares regardless of sex, except that a youngest child who has looked after his parents receives a double portion.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Sedang, like other highland groups of the Republic of Vietnam, have no overall tribal political organization. Although the Sedang regard themselves as a distinct ethnic group, their highest realized form of political organization is the autonomous village, which occasionally cooperates with other villages in the immediate area. As previously mentioned, the Sedang define a village as the sum of all persons who drink from the same water source. There are no clans within the Sedang; only the village and family function as political units.[1]

Within the village, the basic political unit is the extended family, consisting of as many as 30 nuclear families—man, wife, and unmarried children—living in the same longhouse and presided over by the eldest male member, the household chief or *kan hngii*. In turn, the several household chiefs in a Sedang village form the village council of elders which meets to solve village problems as they arise.

The village headman or *kan pley* is selected by lot from among the household chiefs, or elders. He has only the power to voice the collective consensus of the village as expressed by the elders and to execute the elders' decisions. Although the headman has little personal political power, he does represent the village to outsiders, lead war parties, and act as priest at village sacrifices.[2]

In addition to the traditional village headman; the French administration created another village functionary—the *tyulang*. Appointed by the French from among the villagers, the tyulang was the liaison between the French and the Sedang. Although the French delegated many responsibilities to him, such as initiating French programs, collecting taxes, and communicating French policies and decrees, he had little real local authority. The Sedang preferred to follow their own traditionally selected village headman. The tyulang merely served as a buffer between the French and the Sedang village; if Sedang villagers wished to ignore the French directives communicated by the tyulang, they did so—often with impunity.[3]

Although in theory the village headman takes precedence in all matters, in reality the household and the household chiefs have most of the political power among the villagers. Should an individual, a nuclear family, or an entire household commit a crime or oppose the majority of the other villagers, exile is an alternative to submission to the collective judgment of the village.[4]

The village is the supreme political unit among the Sedang, but the Sedang do have a concept of "region" or *kon*, a loose cooperative organization of several villages, usually of the same subgroup. The villages within a kon trade with one another, generally abstain from raids on each other, and sometimes unite for offensive or defensive warfare. Due to a general similarity of laws and customs among the villages, intervillage quarrels are usually settled by discussion and agreement between village elders and headmen. Although there is no formal political organization within the kon, an aggressive village sometimes becomes dominant, and the other villages will follow its dictates. Occasionally when such a dominant village is subdued by an outside group, the other villages of the kon will also submit.[5]

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam handles relations between villages; a government representative deals with each group of seven or eight villages, while the villages themselves are represented by their village headmen.

Legal System

The Sedang reportedly have a complex legal system. Traditional tribal laws are unwritten and are expressed by taboos known and respected by all tribal members. Disputes and punishments for violations are the concern of the family and village. The household chief administers justice and arbitrates disputes among members of the extended family; however, the village chief and the council of elders must be informed of his actions; in the event of a serious violation, the village headman and council of elders will take jurisdiction from him. The nuclear family and, ultimately, the household are responsible for violations by tribemen.[6]

Most laws are inforced through economic sanctions. Guilty persons are required to pay a fine to both the offended party and the village; in addition, a sacrifice to appease the spirits is often required. In the past, capital punishment was not unusual among the Sedang; it was an alternative for those unable to pay the blood price—a fine in money or goods (usually a large number of buffaloes) paid to relatives of a murdered person by the murderer or his family to atone for the crime.[7]

The French administration instituted a special legal system to govern the Montagnard tribes. Allowing the traditional system to continue, they began the codification of tribal laws and the organization of native tribunals, located in the provincial capitals of the Central Highlands. Montagnard judges sitting in these tribunals handled cases that could not be settled at the village level. Judgments were made according to the various tribal laws.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, although steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to integrate politically the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[8]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two Montagnard assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[9] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be reached, the case can be referred to a higher court.[10]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[11]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[12]

Subversive Influences

Factors contributing to the vulnerability of the Sedang to subversion are geographic location, historical isolation, and traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese. Effective government presence and control in the Sedang area have been eroded by Viet Cong activity during the past few years.

The principal objective of Viet Cong subversive activity among the Sedang is to win the allegiance of the tribesmen and develop them into a hostile force against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Still other important Viet Cong objectives are the maintenance of their supply lines through the Sedang area, the prevention of movement of Central Government forces in the area, and the destruction of any Government strongholds in the region.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village, attempting to win the confidence of the whole village or its key individuals. This is a slow process, requiring the creation of a bond with the villagers by helping them with community development and medical aid. The Viet Cong usually have a thorough knowledge of tribal customs; they will adopt Sedang dress to identify themselves with the tribe.

When suspicions of the villagers are allayed and their confidence won, the Viet Cong begin an intense propaganda campaign against the Central Government with the ultimate purpose of recruiting and training the tribesmen for various support or combat missions.

Should propaganda and cajolery fail, the Viet Cong will resort to extortion and terror to coerce the Sedang into refusing to cooperate with the Central Government.[13]

Great pressure has been put on Sedang tribesmen to aid the Viet Cong, but the Viet Cong have apparently had to resort to kidnapping young Sedang tribesmen to get them to join active combat or support units.[14] When villagers support the Viet Cong, they do so because their family or villages are threatened. Whether any Sedang have willingly joined the Viet Cong is not known.

The Sedang were the first highland tribe of the Republic of Vietnam to be trained by the U.S. Special Forces. About two battalions of the Sedang were armed, and weapons were distributed to villagers to enable them to defend themselves. In one case, the Sedang fought aggressively against the Viet Cong with only crossbows,[15] indicating that they will fight the Viet Cong, whom they consider a threat to their way of life, with whatever arms are available.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of relaying information in the Sedang area is by word of mouth. The Sedang do not have a written language, although one is now reportedly being devised by the missionaries. Hence, written communications would have little effect. Any radios in the Sedang area have probably been brought in by outsiders for military use.

Because of their strong communal feelings, information activities among the Sedang should probably be oriented around projects explicitly beneficial to the Sedang village. Possible themes are the control of disease, improvement of agriculture, and protection from Viet Cong harassment.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Sedang religious, social, and cultural traditions. Because of the Sedang political structure, all initial contacts should be made with the village headman and the elders. The Sedang must also be psychologically prepared for the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village-oriented and prefer to remain isolated in their traditional way of life, the Sedang respond most favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposals should stress the improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained; the Sedang resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it.

Current civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government include the resettlement of the Sedang into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and some attempts to educate the Sedang tribesmen.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness. Projects using familiar materials and products, as much as possible, are more easily accepted by the tribesmen than projects requiring the use of strange materials or devices.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion periods or have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.

5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Sedang encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative, but not all inclusive or in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
   a. Improvement of livestock through introduction of better breeds.
   b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
   c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
   d. Techniques to improve quality and yields of farm land.
   e. Insect and rodent control.
   f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
   a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
   b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
   c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
   d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
   a. Improve village sanitation.
   b. Provide safe water supply systems.
   c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
   d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
   e. Teach basic principles of sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
   a. Provide basic literacy training.
   b. Provide basic citizenship education.
   c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Sedang have a reputation as skilled and capable fighters in both offensive and defensive warfare. They have a long history of warfare and are proud of their skill as warriors and hunters. The Sedang have natural abilities and instincts which are useful in modern jungle warfare. Given support and leadership, Sedang may become effective forces in modern military operations.

Prior Military Training and Experience

The Sedang were the first Montagnard tribe to receive U.S. military training and equipment, as well as the first tribe to actively resist the Viet Cong. Early in 1962 the Sedang began receiving U.S. assistance; by the middle of that year, they had been formed into a Montagnard Self-Defense Corps comprising two battalions of armed tribesmen. The platoons of this military force were distributed among 57 armed villages, with about one platoon of 10 men in each village. Approximately 650 hand weapons were distributed among the villages. With these arms and training, the villagers aggressively resisted the Viet Cong.

In June 1962, a Sedang village was attacked by a Viet Cong force. Armed with only traditional weapons, the villagers drove off the Viet Cong attackers. Two days later, the Viet Cong returned; after an hour's fighting, they penetrated the village and took away all the young men. This and similar incidents have turned the Sedang against the Viet Cong.[1]

Americans working with the Sedang evaluate them highly as fighters. It has been reported that every man, woman, and child in the Sedang area is an effective soldier.[2]

Weapons Utilized by the Tribe

The traditional Sedang weapons are spears, swords, crossbows, and poisoned arrows. The Sedang are familiar with the use of traps, pits, and concealed, sharpened bamboo sticks—spiked foot traps.

As noted, some Sedang have received training in the use of modern weapons from U.S. military personnel. Their relatively small physical size makes the Sedang more comfortable and adept with small, light weapons. Traditionally the Sedang have taken good care of their weapons.

Like many mountain tribes, the Sedang are skilled and proud hunters—their skill and pride are transferred to their use and care of modern weapons. If a Sedang tribesman can conveniently carry and handle a weapon, he can be expected to use it well.

Willingness to Fight

In warfare on their own terms, the Sedang are willing, often even anxious, to use offensive tactics. However, they are reluctant to fight offensively without superiority in numbers or in weaponry; nevertheless, the Sedang defend their villages even if attacked by a clearly superior force. Night attacks and fighting from ambush are their favorite methods.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE SEDANG

Every action of the Sedang tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Sedang may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Sedang are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Sedang village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village headman and elders.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Sedang. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Sedang tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. No immediate, important decision should be asked of a Sedang. An opportunity for family consultation should always be provided; if not, a flat refusal to cooperate may result.
7. Tribal elders and the appointed village chief should receive some of the credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Sedang should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used, because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse a Sedang offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a Sedang house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the Sedang.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Sedang ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Sedang house, unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Sedang women.
8. Generally, the Sedang are eager to learn; however, teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Sedang believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.
3. Do not mock Sedang religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Sedang life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Sedang property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should

not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.

2. When trading with the Sedang, outsiders should always allow time for family conferences, as the individual Sedang is obliged by tradition to consult his family before selling anything.
3. Learn simple phrases in the Sedang language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the tribespeople.

Health and Welfare

1. The Sedang are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Sedang areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. George Devereux, "Functioning Units in Ha(rh)ndea(ng) Society," *Primitive Man*, X (1937), pp. 1–2.
2. Henri, Maître, *Les Jungles moi* (Paris: Émile Larose, 1912), p. 412.
3. Frank M. LeBar *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 146.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Richard L. Phillips, "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XVI (Winter 1962), p. 13.
6. Maître, *op. cit.*, pp. 412–14; Gerald C. Hickey, *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964), pp. 59–60.
7. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), p. 20.
8. National Geographic Service of Vietnam, *Map of Vietnam*, Sheet 8—Qui Nhon, 1963.
9. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 83–84.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
11. National Geographic Service of Vietnam, *op. cit.*

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 94.
2. Georges Coedès, *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950), pp. 1–16.
3. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
4. Devereux, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
5. Denis Warner, *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 179.
6. George Devereux, "The Potential Contributions of the Moi to the Cultural Landscape of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, VI (1946–47), p. 394.
7. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), p. 1050.
8. Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), p. 68.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
10. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 3.
11. *Ibid.*

12. Paul P. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLV (1952), p. 495.
13. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 4–5.
14. Paul P. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum* (Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952), p. 310.
15. Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 233.
16. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Cover photographs, *Jungle Frontiers,* XI (Summer 1960) and XIV (Winter 1961); Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1071.
2. A. Maurice, "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), p. 136.
3. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–31.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–14.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
7. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1035.
8. R. P. J. B. Guerlach, "Chez les sauvages de la Cochinchine orientale: Bahnar, Reungao, Sedang," *Missions Catholiques,* XXVI (1894), p. 219.
9. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu bahnar, op. cit.*, p. 329.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
11. Guerlach, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
12. Devereux, "Potential Contributions," *op. cit.*, p. 394.
13. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 502.
14. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 7.
15. Devereux, "Potential Contributions," *op. cit.*, pp. 393–95.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 7.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–8; Dam Bo., *op. cit.*, p. 1086.
3. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
4. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1086.
5. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 473; Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu bahnar, op. cit.*, p. 173.
6. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 6.
7. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
8. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu bahnar, op. cit.*, p. 338.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 489.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 334.
11. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 6.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 466.
14. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
15. George Devereux, *A Study of Abortion in Primitive Societies* (New York: Julian Press, 1955), pp. 318–20.
16. *Ibid.*
17. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965), pp. xiii-4.

18. LeBar, *et al.*, p. 148.
19. Maurice, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–39.
20. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 478; Le Bar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
21. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu bahnar, op. cit.*, p. 367.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Cover photograph, *Jungle Frontiers*, XIV (Winter 1961).
2. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1149.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 1021.
4. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 2.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
7. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 1152.
8. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 2.
9. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 978.
10. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 545.
11. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 978.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 979.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 980.

VI. RELIGION

1. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1130–37.
2. Hickey, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–64.
3. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1130–37.
4. Devereux, "Potential Contributions," *op. cit.*, p. 393.
5. Guerlach, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
6. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 4–5.
7. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, p. 450.
8. George Devereux, "Principles of Ha(rhn)dea(ng) Divination," *Man*, XXXVIII (1938), pp. 125–27.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Devereux, "Potential Contributions," *op. cit.*, p. 393.
2. *Ibid.;* Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 3–7.
3. Paul P. Guilleminet, "L'Économie des tribus moi de l'Indochine," *Revue Indochinoise Juridique et Économique*, XXI (1943), pp. 121–23.
4. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 1–7.
5. Guilleminet, "La Tribu bahnar," *op. cit.*, pp. 472–73.
6. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 1–7; Devereux, "Contributions," *op. cit.*, p. 393.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 1–4.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–7; Devereux, "Potential Contributions," *op. cit.*, pp. 392–95; Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu bahnar, op. cit.*, p. 224.
3. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, p. 3; Devereux, "Potential Contributions," *op. cit.*, p. 393.
4. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 5–7.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–7; Devereux, "Potential Contributions," p. 3; Guilleminet, Coutumier de la tribu bahnar, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

7. Devereux, "Functioning Units," *op. cit.*, pp. 3–7; Devereux, "Potential Contributions," *op. cit.*, pp. 392–93.
8. *Ibid.;* Gerald C. Hickey, "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
9. Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 121–43.
14. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
15. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–98.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

No footnotes.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–98.
2. *Ibid.*

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE SEDANG

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benedict, Paul K. "Languages and Literatures of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, VI, 4 (August 1947), 379–89.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Buttinger, Joseph. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Coedès, Georges. *Ethnography of Indochina* (JPRS/CSO: 6757-DC, Lectures, 1950). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1950.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie*, Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

De Gironcourt, Georges. "Recherches de géographie musicale en Indochine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XVII (1942), 29–174.

Devereux, George. "Functioning Units in Ha(rh)ndea(ng) Society," *Primitive Man*, X (1937), 1–8.

———. "The Potential Contributions of the Moi to the Cultural Landscape of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, VI (1946–1947), 390–95.

———. "Principles of Ha(rhn)dea(ng) Divination," *Man*, XXXVIII (1938), 125–27.

———. *A Study of Abortion in Primitive Societies.* New York: Julian Press, 1955.

Farinaud, M. E. "La Répartition des groupes sanguins chez les Bahnars, les Djarais, et les Sedang: Populations primitives de l'Indochine méridionale," *Comptes Rendus des Séances et Mémoires de la Société de Biologie et de ses Filiales et Associées*, CXXXI (1939), 1236–38.

Guerlach, R. P. J. B. "Chez les sauvages de la Cochinchine orientale: Bahnar, Reungao, Sedang," *Missions Catholiques*, XXVI (1894), 9–12, 21–24, 46–48, 70–71, 81–83, 94–96, 107–108, 115–18, 132–34, 140–44, 157–60, 169–72, 182–83, 193–95, 206–208, 219–20, 241–43.

Guilleminet, Paul P. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum.* Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

———. "L'Économie des tribus moi de l'Indochine," *Revue Indochinoise Juridique et Économique*, XXI (1943), 68–124.

———. "La Tribu bahnar du Kontum," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1952), 393–561.

———. "Recherches sur les croyances des tribus du haut-pays d'Annam, les Bahnar du Kontum et leurs voisins, les magiciens," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme*, IV (1941), 9–33.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. "Comments on Y Bham's Address—15 March 1965." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, March 24, 1965.

———. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

Kemlin, R. P. J. E. "Alliances chez les Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XVII (1917), 1–119.

———. "Rites agraires des Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* IX (1909), 493–522; X (1910), 131–58.

———. "Les Songes et leur interpretation chez les Reungao," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* X (1910), 507–38.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. August, 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government Service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

Lavallée, A. "Notes ethnographiques sur diverses tribus du sud-est de l'Indochine," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* I (1901), 307–308.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Lechesne, Paul. "Les Mois du Centrel-Indochinois," *Revue Indochinoise,* (July-December 1924), 165–81, 365–79; (January-June 1925), 37–58.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

Malleret, Louis. *Ethnic Groups of French Indochina* (JPRS: 12359). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1962.

Mangham, Evelyn. "Superstitions," *Jungle Frontiers,* XI (Summer 1960), 10.

Maurice, A. "À Propos des mutilations dentaires chez les Moi," *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* IV (1941), 135–39.

Maurice, A. and Proux, G. "L'Âme du riz," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* Special Issue, XXIX (1954), 5–134.

McCune, Shannon. "The Diversity of Indochina's Physical Geography," *Far Eastern Quarterly,* VI (November 1946-August 1947), 335–44.

National Geographic Service of Vietnam. *Map of Vietnam, Sheet 8: Qui Nhon.* 1963.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here Are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XVI (Winter 1962), 13.

Raulin, Henri-Pierre. "Les Techniques de la percussion et de la production du feu chez les Stieng," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXII (1947), 111–21.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

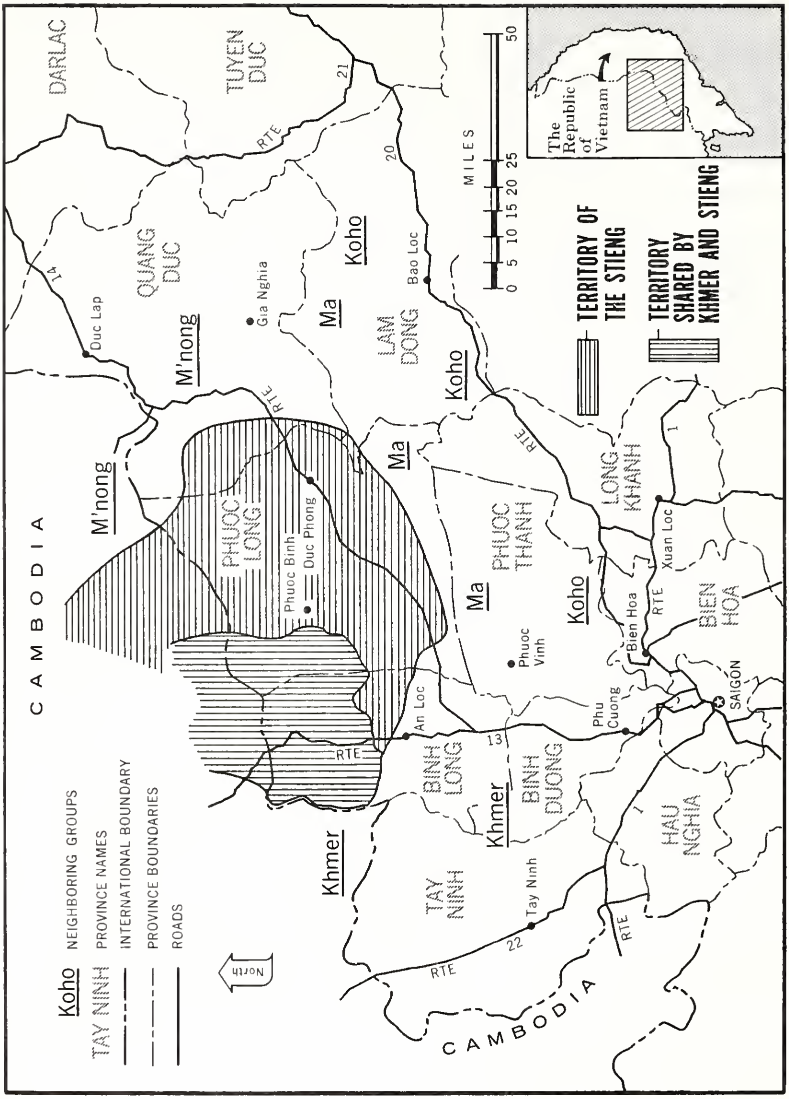
U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of State. *Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam.* (Department of State Publication No. 7839), Far Eastern Series 130, February 1965.

Verneau, R. "Les Âges de la pierre et du bronze dans les pays des Bahnars, des Sedangs, des Reungaos et dans l'arrondissement de Bienhoa," *Mission Pavie, Études Diverses,* III (1904), 27–40.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, South-East Asia, and the West.* New York: Macmillan Company, 1963.

Wickert, Frederic. "The Tribesmen," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 126–35.


CAMBODIA
DARLAC
TUYEN DUC
QUANG DUC
LAM DONG
PHUOC LONG
PHUOC THANH
LONG KHANH
BIEN HOA
BINH LONG
BINH DUONG
TAY NINH
HAU NGHIA
M'nong
Koho
Ma
Khmer
Duc Lap
Gia Nghia
Bao Loc
Phuoc Binh
Duc Phong
Phuoc Vinh
An Loc
Phu Cuong
Bien Hoa
Xuan Loc
SAIGON
Tay Ninh
RTE
14
20
21
13
1
22
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
TERRITORY OF THE STIENG
TERRITORY SHARED BY KHMER AND STIENG
The Republic of Vietnam
Koho NEIGHBORING GROUPS
TAY NINH PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
North

The Stieng

CHAPTER 18. THE STIENG

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Stieng are a large tribal group living on both sides of the Republic of Vietnam-Cambodia border some 75 miles north-northwest of Saigon. Of Mon-Khmer ethnic stock, the Stieng speak a language similar to that of the Bahnar, M'nong, Sedang, and other important Montagnard groups.

The Stieng have a patriarchal society and live in villages which individually form the highest level of political organization they have attained. The Stieng have a subsistence economy based primarily on the slash-and-burn cultivation of dry rice and supplemented by hunting and fishing.

An intensely religious people, the Stieng believe they live in constant interaction with animistic spirits. Among the last of the highland groups to be subdued by the French, the Stieng have a reputation for belligerence and, until recently, have remained isolated from outside influences.

Name, Size, and Location of Group

The Stieng, sometimes called the Budip, number about 60,000 people. Approximately 23,000 live in South Vietnam in the region northwest of Saigon, while the remainder live in the neighboring provinces of Binh Long and Phuoc Long; some Stieng are also in the provinces of Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, Phuoc Thanh, Quang Duc, and, possibly, Bien Hoa.[1]

Although specific information on the subgroups of the Stieng was not available, there appeared to be four subgroups—the Budip, the Budeh, the Bulach, and the Bulo. The specific location of these groups is unavailable.[2]

The Stieng inhabit an area bordered on the northeast by the M'nong tribe, on the east by the Ma group, and on the south by the Vietnamese. The Khmer, who are to the west and southwest, share a large portion of territory with the Stieng in the provinces of Binh Long and Phuoc Long.[3]

The Stieng area rarely exceeds 500 feet in elevation. The landscape varies from low, undulating foothills, strewn with rocks and lava blocks, to flat terrain. The gray, red, or brown soils are generally the compact basaltic type. The red soils are deep because of the decomposition of the easily crumbled basalt or the volcanic ash. The brown soils, less rich in clay than the red soils, are lighter, less cohesive, and easier to work. All the soils in the area are rich in chemicals and, when cleared, are excellent for the cultivation of rubber trees.

The area receives a great deal of rain, generally more than 78 inches per year. The unusually heavy rainfall, during the period from April to mid-September, comes from masses of humid equatorial air moving from west to east. The air masses lose their moisture as they rise on their approach to the high plateau areas.

Most of the Stieng area is covered with a dense rain forest of three levels. The highest level is a canopy created by very old trees, 125 to 150 feet high; the middle level has shorter trees and vines; and the lowest level is underbrush. Little grass grows on the forest floor. Occasional glades are covered with *tranh (Imperata cylindrica)* grass, while rocky areas of lava blocks and conglomerate masses are covered with light forests, consisting mainly of thorny bamboo. Areas along water-courses have particularly luxuriant growths of rattan and bamboo.

Although the area has an annual dry season in the winter (November to March), the forest is almost always extremely humid, either because of the heavy rainfall during the spring and summer seasons or because of the seepage of water through the soil during the dry season. However, the vegetation along the riverbeds and in the occasional glades or rocky patches suffers severely from drought during the relatively dry winter months.

The Stieng area has few large animals, with the exception of roving herds of elephants and boars. Hunting in the Stieng area is difficult because of the scarcity of large game. An inexperienced hunter might easily starve. However, many small mammals—porcupines, scaly anteaters, squirrels, civets, and monkeys—as well as reptiles, birds, and insects are found in this region. During the wet season, numerous leeches and other bloodsuckers appear in the forests.

Many springs in the forest area are breeding places for malaria-bearing mosquitoes. Cambodian and Vietnamese peasants in bordering locations are aware of the health hazards and are reluctant to go into the Stieng forest or to spend any extended period of time there.

The lowlands in the southwest portion of the Stieng territory are comparatively open and are under cultivation. Rubber plantations are scattered throughout the southern and western portions of this area.

Many rivers and streams flow through the western Stieng lowland area; mountain streams are prevalent in the eastern part near the Annamite Mountains. The Song Bo is the principal river.

National Route 13 runs north to south in the western area near the Cambodian border; Route 14 runs southwest to northeast through the Annamite Mountains in the eastern section. Secondary roads and trails are few in the Stieng area. All roads in this region are difficult to maintain.[4]

SECTION II

TRIBAL BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

Anthropologists consider the Stieng a Mon-Khmer people, related to the Khmer or Cambodian people. Several other tribes in the Republic of Vietnam—including the Bahnar, the M'nong, and the Sedang—are also of Mon-Khmer stock. These tribes have similar customs and agricultural patterns. Their languages also are similar, though not mutually intelligible.[1]

Language

The Stieng language gives its name to a part of the Mon-Khmer family called the Stiengian subgrouping. The M'nong, Ma, and Sre languages are also members of this language subgroup.[2]

The Stieng language is made up, for the most part, of monosyllabic words. Word order in sentences seems to be flexible.[3] Available information does not indicate the existence of a written Stieng language.

Stieng tribesmen have a limited knowledge of French, Vietnamese, and languages of neighboring tribes, probably obtained from trade contacts. Stieng tribesmen who served as soldiers with the French army know some French, and members of the Budeh subgroup apparently understand some of the M'nong dialects.[4] Very few Stieng can read and write; the literate tribesmen probably attended Government or missionary schools, where the languages taught were French and Vietnamese.

Legendary History

According to a Stieng legend, their tribesmen once belonged to only one tribe and lived along the shore of the China Sea. The legend relates that a god descended from heaven and married a tribal girl named Dai Cho Phek. The god and Dai Cho Phek had a son, Djieng, who was taken back to heaven, where he was taught magic and the trades. Djieng was very ingenious; he knew how to forge tools, to weave baskets, to build houses, and to till the soil. The god sent Djieng back to earth to teach the trades to his tribe. Djieng married a girl named Lo'm, and they both became immortal.

The ruler of China made war on Djieng, who was compelled to retreat to the south with his soldiers and tribespeople. One day

Djieng and his soldiers crossed a stream by cutting their way through a quick-growing shrub, *tom rklang*. The rest of the tribespeople, who were somewhat behind, met a talking dog at the stream. The dog told them that Djieng and his soldiers had passed that way long before—a lie. "See how clear the waters of the brook are and how the bushes are undisturbed," said the dog. Djieng's followers believed the dog, not realizing that the fast stream had carried the mud away and that a new growth of tom rklang had appeared. The group of tribespeople remained at that site and founded the Stieng tribe.[5]

Factual History

Little information concerning the factual history of the Stieng is available. However, they are known to have revolted against French rule on at least two occasions. In 1862, before the French were firmly in control of Cochin China, the Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) revolted with the support of several Stieng groups.[6] The Vietnamese, however, then invaded the Stieng territory; the lower regions were overrun first, and the invaders slowly moved inland. By 1875, most villages in the area of Hon Quan were designated by the Vietnamese names—An Loc, Binh Tay, Dong Phat, Dong No, and Xuan La—although they were inhabited solely by the Stieng. These villages made up two cantons of the Delegation of Hon Quan and were subjected to Vietnamese law. By superior strength the Vietnamese were able to inflict their will on the Stieng.

In the years following this first revolt, the Stieng peacefully remained in their villages and were of little concern to either the French or the Vietnamese. Occasional travelers passed through Stieng territory, but they apparently met with no interference from the tribesmen. Largely because of the inhospitable terrain and climate of their area, the Stieng remained relatively isolated until the French began to develop the area in the 1920's and 1930's.[7]

When the French found that the soils and climate of the Stieng area were favorable to rubber trees, they established large rubber plantations in the 1920's and 1930's. The French dispossessed the Stieng and attempted to use them as field laborers on the plantations. Since the Stieng were not good fieldworkers, the French imported North Vietnamese—Tonkinese—to work on the plantations. The loss of tribal land and the importation of the Tonkinese created dissention between the French and the tribespeople, causing the Stieng to withdraw deeper into the tropical forests, further isolating them from outside influences.[8]

In 1933, the second Stieng rebellion against the French occurred, apparently due to the encroachment of the rubber plantation owners. On October 29 of that year, Morere, a French official, was killed at a military post in Stieng territory. Over the then newly constructed roads, the French quickly moved in their troops, including some Rhade tribesmen among the militia. Within 3 months, the uprising was crushed.[9]

After the Stieng area had been completely pacified by the French, relations between the tribesmen and the French improved. Stieng tribesmen began to serve in the French army, and some fought for the French during the Indochina War. The Stieng are still very proud of their military service with the French and proudly wear tattered remnants of their old uniforms.[10]

Settlement Patterns

Every few years, the Stieng shift their agricultural activities to new sites; at the same time, their villages are moved close to the new fields. These shifts are not migrations, as the new sites are usually not far from the old ones, but do constitute a regular movement within the tribal area. The villagers themselves establish the pattern of settlement, including the choice of the village site.

Stieng villages are usually small, seldom containing more than 30 persons and occasionally consisting of only one family. The villages are widely scattered over the Stieng area; the distances between them are great enough to permit each village to be completely independent.

In the past, when intervillage warfare was prevalent, Stieng villages were fortified with walls of large logs covered with tree branches. Thousands of sharpened stakes were interspersed among the tree branches and arranged at various heights. In addition, the dense foliage of the jungle itself hid the fortified villages and made detection difficult.[11]

The Stieng live in thatched houses built on bamboo poles about 6 to 10 feet off the ground. The walls of the typical Stieng house are made of woven bamboo screens, which slant slightly outward to join the roof of grass or palm fronds. The loosely woven bamboo floor permits refuse to fall through to the ground.

A platform, 6 to 10 feet above the ground, is built at the entrance to the house and is reached from the ground by a bamboo ladder or a wooden log with notched steps. The entrance to the house is quite small, and one must stoop to pass through it. The door is apparently made in this fashion for easy defense against attack.[12]

The interior of the house is divided into two sections, one for sleeping and the other for communal activities. The sleeping area, raised slightly above the communal area, is sectioned off into compartments by woven bamboo screens. The communal area, longer than the sleeping area, is also divided into two parts: one area is used for cooking and food storage; the second area is used for entertaining guests, eating, and storing valuables such as gongs, jars, weapons, iron cooking pots, and gourds. Because the house has no chimney to carry away the smoke from the cooking fires, the air inside may be quite heavy and close. However, the smoke does serve as an insect repellent.

Some equipment is kept underneath the house, such as howdahs, baskets, and mortars and pestles for pounding husks from rice. Areas underneath and around the houses are littered with refuse that falls through the floor of the house, as well as that from the dogs, chickens, and pigs that live under the house.[13]

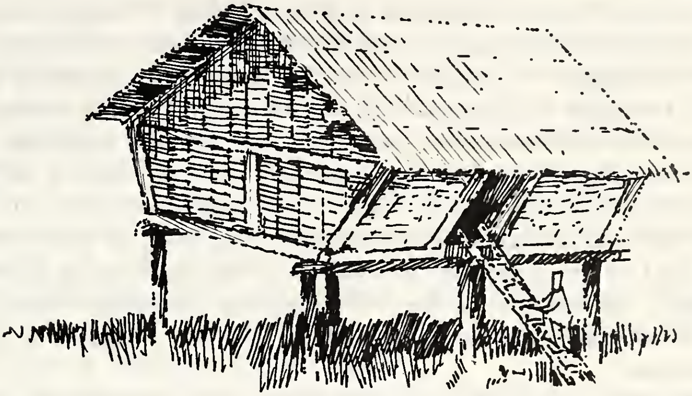


Figure 52. Stieng house.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

A typical Stieng tribesman is about 5 feet 5 inches tall. His skin is darker than that of the Vietnamese and may range from brown to copper. A Stieng wears his hair long, fastening it in a bun at the nape of his neck with one of many varying decorations.

The Stieng tribesman is well built, strong and muscular. His thigh and chest muscles are especially well developed, although the limbs sometimes appear frail. Few Stieng are fat. The Mongolian eyefold is rarely encountered. The nose is more bridged than that of the average Oriental, and the forehead is high with generally prominent brows. The Stieng tribesman usually has body odor, as he rarely takes a bath and he sleeps in a smoke-filled house.[1]

Distinctive physical characteristics of the Stieng are pierced and elongated earlobes. The earlobes of the Stieng are usually pierced when they are very young. At first, a small wire or piece of cloth is worn in the hole in the earlobe; later, larger items are placed in the hole, until a plug, often ivory and approximately 1.5 inches in diameter, is worn.

The arms, chests, and foreheads of the Stieng tribespeople are often tattooed with various symbolic lines and triangles. They tattoo by puncturing the skin with a sharp piece of bamboo dipped in a root stain; after the wound heals, a blue design remains indelibly etched in the skin. Tattoos are losing favor among the Stieng who served in the French Army or have otherwise been in contact with outside groups. However, tribesmen living in remote villages and all the tribal women still use tattoos for personal decoration.[2]

Health

Village sanitation and personal hygiene among the tribespeople are very rudimentary. In the tribal area, diseases are spread by insects, worms, poor sanitation, and sexual contact.[3]

Malaria is a major disease among the Stieng. In 1947, the French reported that 92 percent of all infants in the Stieng area had malaria;[4] thus, by adulthood, every tribesman has probably contracted the disease. Two common types of malaria in the Stieng area are the benign tertian malaria, which causes high fever with relapses over a period of time but is usually not fatal; and malignant tertian malaria, which is fatal.[5]

The carriers of the three types of typhus prevalent in this area are lice, rat fleas, and mites. Reportedly, mite-carried typhus is especially prevalent among the tribes.[6] Cholera, dysentery, yaws, venereal diseases, smallpox, and various parasitic and fungus diseases are also prevalent in this area.[7]

The Stieng believe disease is caused by evil spirits; for cures, the tribespeople resort to a village sorcerer. The sorcerer knows how to use remedies concocted from herbs, barks, and other items; how to select the proper amulet; how to properly place curative objects in the house or village; and how to make the proper blood sacrifices. Blood sacrifices involve prayers, the sacrifice of a dog, pig, or buffalo, and the drinking of rice wine. Such sacrifices are most frequently associated with birth and serious illnesses. At these sacrificial ceremonies, the sorcerers throw themselves into trances and writhe about on the ground.[8]

Aside from the contagious diseases, the health of the Stieng is largely dependent upon the adequacy of food supplies obtained from farming, hunting, and fishing.[9]

The Vietnamese Government operates medical facilities in towns near the Stieng area. In more remote Stieng areas, free from the Viet Cong, medical assistance teams have occasionally brought aid to the tribal villages. These activities, however, have met with only limited success because of the isolation of the Stieng villages, which cannot be easily reached by modern means of transport.

The Stieng have been receptive to the Western medical treatment available to them. Western medicine is known in most of the tribal areas, where tribesmen served in the French or Vietnamese armies, where U. S. Army medical teams have visited, and where the people are in contact with missionary hospitals. Western medicine would probably be resisted in only the most isolated villages.

For hunting and traveling long distances through the forests, Stieng endurance is good. The Stieng are able to remain in the forests, hunting and living off the land, for as long as a month.[10]

The physical size of the Stieng tribesmen (about 5 feet, 5 inches) limits the size of the weapons that they can handle to lightweight, portable arms for mobile operations. In fixed emplacements, however, the Stieng could handle heavier equipment.

Psychological Characteristics

The Stieng are considered one of the more warlike tribes of the Republic of Vietnam. Before the Stieng area was completely controlled and pacified by the French and the Vietnamese, the Stieng raided other villages for slaves in well-organized and well-executed attacks.

By Western standards, the Stieng may appear lazy, for they do not submit to the observance of regular hours.[11] Judged by their performance of tasks of a routine nature, the Stieng are apathetic and seem incapable of sustained effort.[12] Hence, the Stieng were not considered satisfactory workers for the rubber plantations in the area. Nevertheless, the Stieng are capable of hard work, in terms of seasonal activities and their own culture. The Steing, for example, work long and hard in the late winter and early spring to prepare for planting; at other times, they are very active in hunting, fishing, and harvesting.

The Stieng love their independence and will obey a chief's directions only if they agree with them. In disputes with chiefs, villages have been known to split, and members to leave the villages.[13] Stieng tribesmen are oriented first toward the family and then toward the village. The individual tribesman trusts the members of his family, because he is familiar with their obligations to him as well as with their behavior. Loyalty is centered in the family and, to a degree, in the village.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Stieng society is patriarchal, family and village centered, and generally monogamous. Social status is determined by affluence; families own land, while individuals own personal items.

The Stieng have never had overall tribal unity or an overall tribal leader, nor do they appear to have a clan structure.[1]

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

The Stieng have a patriarchal society: the women are subordinate to the men, who hold all positions of authority. Upon marriage, the men remain in the household of their fathers, in contrast to the custom among the Rhade and Jarai, where the man goes to live in the house of his wife's mother. Among the Stieng, inheritances and the family name are passed through the male line, again differing from the Rhade and Jarai.[2]

Stieng men do the heavy work, such as clearing the land and bringing in the harvest; they also hunt and fish. The women perform lighter farming tasks and are responsible for collecting edible tubers and other foods from the forest.[3]

The Stieng greatly prize their children, who are allowed much freedom.

Marriage

Since the Stieng have a patriarchal society, the male selects his future spouse, either directly or through a go-between who is a member of his family. However, mutual consent is the rule, and only rarely will parents, unless driven by need, sell a daughter to the highest bidder. Normally, young people yield to their mutual desires, often having intercourse before the wedding.

Once the young Stieng has made his choice, his parents sound out the girl through a female go-between. If the girl accepts, the two families confer and agree upon the terms of the marriage contract. Each family chooses a witness, a *nak mha* or a *konran sai,* who knows the traditional customs, as well as the prayers to invoke the spirits. The wedding is celebrated by tying the wrists of the couple with a cotton string and asking the spirits to bless the union with health, love, wealth, and many offspring. Following the ceremony, the two witnesses, the two families with their kin and friends, and the village notables are invited to the feast. When the groom's family is wealthy, a buffalo and three pigs are sacrificed, and a number of jars of rice wine are provided for the feast; a poor family will provide pigs and serve one jar of rice wine.

If a tribesman wants to set up his own home or bring a wife into his own family, he must pay his wife's family a bride price—money, property, or services given by or in behalf of a prospective husband to the bride's family. In addition to the bride price, various sacrificial objects must be delivered before the wedding: one pig for the spirits of the forest, one pig for the household gods, a third pig in honor of the witnesses, and a buffalo in honor of all of the wedding guests.

If no bride price is paid, the groom joins his wife's family, and he becomes a *djo'ma sai* (adopted son). When his in-laws die, he stays on in their house, or at least in the same village. This custom corresponds to *lam re* (making a son-in-law) in Vietnamese society.

Adultery by a husband is tolerated by Stieng custom; adultery by a wife is treated as a transgression. When a husband deceives his wife, she cannot ask for a divorce; she may only reproach him and ask that he sacrifice a chicken in conciliation.

When a Stieng wife commits adultery, her partner must make restitution to her husband. This payment is customarily a fine—cattle, pigs, gongs, or jars of rice wine—or reimbursement of the husband's bride price.[4] The severity of the penalty is determined by the site of the offense (the fine being higher if the offense occurred in the house of the adulterer) and identity of adulterer (a stranger paying a larger fine than an acquaintance).

If the wife repeats the adulterous act, her husband will ask for a divorce and for the repayment of his bride price by either her lover or her family. A woman with several lovers is repudiated as a common prostitute.

Divorce and Second Marriages

Divorce, allowed by Stieng custom, is based on the consent of husband and wife, the consent of their families and children, and the reimbursement of the bride price to the husband or to his family.

When the husband, with the consent of his wife, wishes a divorce, her family keeps the bride price and receives, in addition, a sacrifice of a pig and a jar of rice wine. If the wife remarries, her family must return half the bride price. The children go with their mother when the father has initiated the divorce.

When the wife wants the divorce, her family must return the bride price, the gifts, and cost of the wedding ceremony and must offer a sacrifice of a pig and a jar of rice wine. In this case, the children remain with the father.

When a Stieng husband has been absent for several years, his wife may ask her in-laws for permission to remarry. If the in-laws give their consent, the second husband must reimburse them for the bride price.

If a woman dies from a miscarriage or in childbirth, and if the husband, living with his in-laws, seeks to remarry, he must pay the entire bride price plus a sacrifice of a buffalo and a jar of rice wine.[5]

In general, Stieng society permits the widow or widower to remarry according to his or her own choice. However, a widow is free to marry again only if her husband did not fully pay for the presents due his wife's family: if the presents were given and paid for, the widow is compelled to marry the brother of the deceased husband, even if this means relegation to the rank of second wife. Refusal to follow the tradition automatically entails return of the bride price.[6]

Birth and Abortion

Apparently, Stieng women in childbirth are attended by midwives who receive no payment. Information on delivery, birth ceremonies, and postbirth activities is not available.

Birth of a stillborn child, in normal course of events, does not result in punishment of the wife. But if the wife induces abortion, her husband may abandon her: in case the bride price has not been paid, the wife is returned to her family, without indemnity; if the bride price has been paid, she must remain with her in-laws. If a wife is aborted by someone else, in agreement with her husband, nothing is done. If the abortion was without the husband's consent, the person performing it must care for the wife until she is completely recovered, must pay the husband an indemnity of eight buffaloes, and must offer an appropriate sacrifice. Should the woman die, the person who performed the abortion must pay damages to the husband and the woman's family.[7]

The Stieng rarely tolerate infanticide, which today is punishable by severe penalties—even the death sentence. In the past, however, the Stieng reportedly killed deformed infants.

Class Structure

The Stieng have three classes: wealthy tribesmen, ordinary tribesmen, and slaves.[8] The wealthy Stieng achieve their position by accumulating slaves, elephants, valuable jars, and gongs. The vast majority of Stieng, however, are born into ordinary families.

The Stieng have two types of slaves: permanent slaves, captured or purchased, and considered permanent property of their owners; and temporary slaves, in bondage for debt. Orphans are sometimes sold as slaves, and occasionally a family might even sell a child to satisfy debts.

Degree of Social Mobility

There is mobility among the three Stieng social classes, especially between the ordinary tribesmen and the slaves, because tribesmen frequently go into debt and temporary slavery to buy animals for religious sacrifices. Thus, a tribesman may move up or down within the social structure.

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Almost all Stieng activities are regulated by numerous customs and taboos. There are prescribed methods and procedures governing everything from dress to construction of houses to the settlement of disputes and individual behavior. Having no written language, the Stieng have passed down these prescriptions from generation to generation until they have attained the force of customary law. Believing that the world around them abounds in both good and evil spirits, the Stieng are constantly trying to avoid actions, activities, and contact with objects or animals that they believe might displease the spirits.

Dress

In the Stieng area, men usually wear a simple loincloth. On ceremonial occasions, they also wear a thigh-length coat which buttons down the front. Men who served in the French Army still wear remnants of old uniforms. Other articles of Western apparel are also seen, and T-shirts are especially prized. Neither the men nor the women wear sandals.

Stieng women ordinarily wear a short skirt, and leave the upper part of the body nude. On ceremonial occasions the women usually wear a cloth, 9 to 12 feet long, draped over one shoulder and tied under the opposite armpit. This long cloth is also used to carry their babies.

Stieng children wear no clothing until they are about 6 years old; their hair is always cut very short, except for a single lock at the crown.

Jewelry or other ornaments are worn by all the Stieng. Women wear heavy brass or copper bangles on their ankles. Both men and women wear copper or brass bracelets. Large plugs of ivory are worn in the earlobes, and the tribespeople are tattooed with symbolic lines and triangles.* Hairpins are worn to keep their hair in place. Children usually have jewelry around their necks, and from birth until about the 4th year they wear an anklet with two bells.

---

* See "Physical Characteristics," p. 729.

Folk Beliefs

Numerous fears, superstitions, and prejudices are associated with the Stieng's animistic religion. The Stieng believe that good and evil spirits inhabit all the objects of their world, including such things as streams, rocks, the soil, crossbows, jars, and gongs. The evil spirits actively cause trouble for the man who fails to observe the appropriate actions when dealing with any object or when performing any task. The spirits cause evil to befall the offending person or the village; hence, the Stieng live so that they will not offend the spirits. Stieng customs deal with human-spirit relations, taboos, and the penalties for violations. For example, a person entering a taboo village is thereby responsible for any illnesses or accidents subsequently occurring in the village, for he has offended the spirits who, in retaliation, cause illnesses and accidents.

The most significant customs and taboos are discussed in the sections which follow. Tribesmen violating the taboos are punished; outsiders from a powerful group, such as the Vietnamese or United States Government, are not usually held responsible for violations of tribal taboos. However, the Stieng long remember the person flouting their customs and may associate the group, as well as the individual offender, with the taboo violation.

Customs Relating to Outsiders

Because life among the Stieng is village centered, nontribal members and nonvillage members are treated alike: all outsiders are viewed with suspicion. The villager's main concern is, "Will the presence of the outsider offend the spirits and bring illness and accidents upon the village?" Persons who so offend the spirits are called *cang rai*. If an outsider, by his presence, offends the spirits and does not perform the appropriate placating sacrifice, he has, in the eyes of the tribesmen, committed an extremely serious offense. Before the Stieng area was completely pacified by the French, such offenses were a principal cause of conflict in Stieng villages; reportedly, many offending Frenchmen lost their lives.[1]

Although the Stieng are cautious in receiving outsiders, they are usually hospitable, even appearing to be happy to receive the visitors, as this is a good excuse for a rice wine ceremony. The visitor is courteously received, fed, and housed during his stay. The Stieng manner of receiving visitors is quiet and civil with a natural curiosity.

While the Stieng receive strangers courteously, they do so cautiously, as they are suspicious until they can determine the strangers' motives. In addition, religion probably plays a part, as the Stieng are alert and sensitive to the presence of the stranger who may offend the spirits. The rice wine ceremony for greeting strangers probably also has a religious function—pacifying the spirits for the presence of the stranger in the village.

Eating and Drinking Customs

Rice is the basic staple to the Stieng diet. Indoors, the Stieng sometimes use chopsticks to eat rice, but in the field or while traveling they eat with their hands. A bowl of water is placed among the diners so they may wet their hands; then, with wet fingers, they roll fistfuls of rice into small balls without having the rice stick to their fingers. After two or three mouthfuls, they take a piece of uncrushed salt to crack between their teeth for flavoring. Pimiento is also used for flavoring. After the meal, the Stieng drink water stored in a bamboo tube. The floor is covered with the skin of a cow or deer, used as a tablecloth.

In addition to rice, the Stieng eat soups made of flowers, leaves, gourds, or pumpkins. Other Stieng foods are fish, wild game, buffalo, snails, rats, lizards, crickets, scorpions, snakes, toads, chickens, ducks, eggs, worms, and ants. Taboo foods are tigers, turtles, and domestic elephants.[2]

Rice wine drinking is a key element in all Stieng ceremonies. The wine is prepared by fermenting a mixture of unhusked rice (paddy) and water in a large jar. After the mixture is allowed to ferment for about 10 days, it is poured into another jar. The Stieng drink the wine through bamboo straws directly from this second jar. In order of rank, the participants in the ceremony take turns drinking from the jar. Reportedly, the Stieng drink great quantities of rice wine and are often drunk for long periods of time.

Customs Relating to the Village

Outsiders are forbidden entrance into a Stieng village under certain circumstances. The first 7 days following a formal inauguration of a newly built village are considered sacred. No strangers are allowed to enter the village during this time. It is also forbidden to bring in paddy, jars of rice wine, mortars, pestles, and winnowing baskets. During this same period, there is no cooking in the houses, and no vegetables, pork, or chicken may be eaten. While sacrificial poles—to which sacrificial buffaloes are tied—are being built in the new village, all the men must sleep in the forest. The sign outside the village warning away strangers is a rope, intertwined with a handful of leaves, across the village gate.[3]

When a stranger comes to live permanently in a Stieng village, he must sacrifice a chicken or a pig and rice wine. He must then live in the field he is cultivating—not within the confines of the village—until the village is moved to a new location. In this way the stranger will not offend the evil spirits, thus causing illness and accidents in the village.

There are also certain times when entrance into a Stieng house is forbidden. A house is taboo for 3 days after the birth of a child or the birth of a buffalo or pig belonging to that household. However, if the buffalo or pig is born in the forest rather than near the house, the house is not considered taboo. No one may enter a hut on a cultivated field for 3 days after a child has been born in it, and a house is taboo for 3 days after a sorcerer has conducted a healing ceremony in it.

Warnings that a house is taboo are a closed door and a bamboo pole, with leaves fastened at the top, stuck in the ground in front of the house.[4]

Customs Relating to Warfare

The Stieng techniques for defensive and offensive warfare are discussed elsewhere in this study.* Little information is currently available concerning customs and taboos during war. An early account stated that if a group of warriors en route to an attack saw something that might be an evil omen, the attack would be abandoned.[5]

---

* See "Paramilitary Capabilities," p. 796.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The life of the Stieng is dominated by their animistic belief that the gods and spirits inhabit every animate and inanimate object. The Stieng pantheon comprises good and evil spirits, principal and lesser gods, spirits of the deceased, and ghosts. Sacrifices to placate spirits offended by violation of taboos are the primary religious ritual.

Principal Spirits

The most important Stieng spirits are those of the sun, moon, earth, sky, and lightning. The spirit of the sun is responsible for fertility; the spirit of the moon, for the rhythms of life, such as the calendar, vegetation, and crops; the spirit of the earth, for the growth of things; and the spirit of the sky, for agrarian rites. The spirit of lightning is especially feared by the tribesmen; if certain taboos are broken, they believe this spirit will strike down the guilty party.[1]

The Stieng also have numerous local spirits, including the spirits of the trees, ponds, rocks, and implements, that require certain behavior on the part of the tribesmen. For example, if a tree is to be cut down, the tribesmen will make a small sacrifice to the spirit of the tree in order to avoid arousing its anger. These local spirits take their names from the objects they inhabit; for example, the spirit of a particular mountain is called *yang* (spirit) and the name of the mountain.[2] Evil spirits, or good spirits that are angered by the tribesmen, are believed to cause misfortune, illness, and death. The Stieng believe the evil spirits can "eat the soul" of a living man, thus bringing illness and death.[3]

Religious Ceremonies

Seasonal sacrifices are made for clearing the land and planting the rice in the spring and for the crop harvests in the fall. Every 5 years or so (approximate time of recurring crop failures) a large sacrifice of buffaloes—sometimes as many as 70—is offered to the most important spirits.

Any illness, disease, malady, or violent death is regarded as punishment for the violation of a taboo, thus necessitating sacrifices to effect a cure. The appearance of a stranger in the village and trading (before and after the exchange of goods) may also call for sacrificial rituals.[4]

Stieng religious rituals consist of prayers to the offended spirit or spirits, the ceremonial slaying of the sacrificial animals, and the rite of rice wine drinking. With one exception, all sacrificial ceremonies occur in the village: sacrifices necessitated by the occurrence of violent death are held in the forest so that the ghost of the deceased will not return to haunt the village.

The gravity of the taboo violation of the offense to the spirits determines the kind of sacrifice required, varying from minor offerings of a chicken and a little rice wine to major immolations of one or more buffaloes and very large jars of rice wine. Some sacrifices involve a number of different animals of the same color; for example, after the discovery of incest, the sacrifice calls for white chickens, white pigs, and white buffaloes.

Neighboring villages may be invited to attend the important rituals, such as the seasonal ceremonies.

Missionary Contacts

In 1851 a Catholic mission was established at Brolam; in 1861 Father Azemar came to the area.[5] The Protestants arrived in 1954 with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, sending a Pastor Sung to Nui Bara. Reverend and Mrs. Duncan, assigned to Budop in 1959, are no longer in the Stieng area, presumably because of Viet Cong terrorism.[6]

There is little evidence to show that missionary work among the Stieng had any substantial effect on the tribesmen. Not only were the missionaries confronted with the obstacles of a harsh climate and unhealthy living conditions, but they were also pitted against a primitive culture with a strong animistic religion and the elemental tradtion of the extended family. Individual conversions, at best difficult to achieve, are few among the family-dominated Stieng.

Religious Tenets with Respect to Warfare

There appears to be no religious influence on warfare other than certain ceremonies connected with military activities. Before the French administration, it was reported that ceremonies calling upon the spirits for help and protection preceded all Stieng raids.[7] Whether the tribesmen consider such rituals necessary today is not clear from available information.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Stieng have a subsistence economy based upon swidden or slash-and-burn agriculture and supplemented by hunting and fishing. The family is the basic economic unit among the Stieng.[1]

In the slash-and-burn method of cultivation used by the Stieng, a future field is selected by the men in March; the field is cleared of brush, bamboo, and trees; and the dry, dead cuttings are burned just before the rainy season. The first rain then washes the ashes into the ground and the field is ready for the planting of rice.

Sowing rice, the principal crop of the Stieng, is a communal operation. Neighbors come to each family plot: the men, armed with two sticks, poke holes in the ground at regular intervals; the women, following behind the men, throw several grains of rice into each hole and cover them with soil. Pumpkin seeds and grains of corn are also sown, as they grow faster than rice and help the tribesmen subsist while the rice crops are maturing.

Hunting and fishing are important activities among the Stieng, for the rice crops are frequently insufficient to carry the tribesmen through a whole year.[2]

Special Arts and Skills

The ordinary tribesman can track and stalk game with great skill. His principal weapon is the crossbow with poisoned arrows, and he is also skillful in the use of pits and traps.

The Stieng are versatile and accomplished in the use of bamboo, from which they make the columns, floors, and roofs of their houses, vases, pots, water jugs, baskets, chests, lances, knives, scabbards, and earrings. From the small quantities of cotton they grow, the Stieng weave cloth. They also make primitive pottery, which they occasionally sell.[3]

Although the Stieng have little experience in the use of Western tools and machines, they have simple tools of their own: light weaving frames or looms,[4] two fire-making devices—a bamboo tube containing an oblong iron flint and a sliver of silica, and a rotating bamboo tube inside a hole in another bamboo tube[5]—and iron-bladed tools, such as knives, *coupe-coupes* (machetes), axes, and hoes. Before the advent of the Vietnamese traders, the Stieng worked iron forges, but that art has largely been lost.[6]

Exchange System and Trade

Although they have recently become acquainted with money, the Stieng basically depend upon a barter system of trade. The principal unit of value for barter is the buffalo; lesser units of value are jars, gongs, weapons, and clothes. On occasion, human beings are traded, either as slaves or as indentured servants, in exchange for a service or a material object.[7]

Stieng trade seems to be largely limited to trade between their own villages. However, they do trade some animal and forest products, especially supposed aphrodisiacs, with the Vietnamese in return for salt and highly prized gongs and jars.[8]

Property System

Goods, such as gongs, jars, animals, and tilled lands, belong to the family and are under the control of the husband. Untilled lands are the common property of the entire village and are under control of the village chief.[9] Individual tribesmen own only their personal effects and weapons.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The village is the highest degree of political organization achieved by the Stieng, while the extended family is the basic political unit. The Stieng have never had an overall tribal organization, and before the arrival of the French, the Stieng had never recognized any outside governmental or administrative authority.[1]

Stieng villages are autonomous and can best be described as associations of autonomous extended families, often interrelated, having common economic interests. Each village has an elected chief and a council of elders—"the notables"—made up of the most influential and affluent heads of extended families.

Primary political authority within a Stieng village rests with the family chiefs, usually the eldest males of the extended families. Thus the authority of the chief is limited, making the political unity of any Stieng village loose. Frequently, because of disputes or disagreements, individual families will leave the village and start a new village or join another village.[2]

Method of Selecting Leaders

The eldest male of a Stieng extended family is the head of that family. The most influential and affluent heads of extended families form the village council of elders.

When a village chief dies, the elders of the village ask the villagers to consider the election of a new chief. After consideration, a general meeting for the election and consecration of the new chief is held in the common house. This important session includes the sacrifice of several pigs, oxen, or buffaloes, and many jars of wine.[3] Over the years, this method of selecting leaders has changed little, despite French and Vietnamese efforts to bring the Stieng under a central authority.

Authority Within the Village

The authority of the Stieng village chief is limited; the heads of the various autonomous families within the village actually have more real power. At festivals and ceremonies, the village chief is given the first place, and he presides at village assemblies. In the past, he led the villagers in battle; in recent years, his orders have been obeyed only if the villagers wished to do so, and his tone has become one of request rather than command.[4] Nevertheless, the village chief is held responsible by the Vietnamese Government for actions taken by his village.[5]

The household heads of the Stieng determine when and where to move or to plant crops and resolve disputes within the families.

The council of elders makes collective decisions for the village and serves as a group of advisors for the village chief.

Legal System

Like other tribes in the Republic of Vietnam, the Stieng have long possessed many unwritten laws expressed in terms of taboos and sanctions. These laws, known and respected by all members of the society, are enforced within the family by its head and are implemented in the village by the council of elders and chief.

Traditionally, sanctions were primarily economic, based on the payment of fines. The entire family of an accused individual, not only the individual himself, was responsible for the payment of fines or proper sacrifices. Even voluntary homicide, except in the case of a second offense, could be atoned by the payment of a fine. Although the guilty man could be condemned to death, his life could be purchased by his family by paying the material value of two to four human lives and conducting a special ceremony called *pai kliar*.[6]

The death penalty was imposed upon second offenders whose families refused to help them and upon individuals considered dangerous to the whole village, such as those believed capable of casting an evil spell, or *cak*. The condemned were killed with a lance or a machete; their goods were confiscated, and their wives and children were sold to pay their debts.[7]

Before the French occupation, Stieng justice was administered at two levels or degrees, without any differentiation between civil and criminal offenses and without opportunity of appeal. First-degree judgments involved infractions with a maximum penalty not exceeding two buffaloes. These judgments were determined by a tribunal presided over by the village chief assisted by two village elders experienced in local tradition.[8] In litigation between persons from two different villages, both village chiefs attended. The plaintiff and his chief traveled to the village of the defendant.[9] No kin of either involved party was allowed to sit on the tribunal; if partiality was proven, the decision of the tribunal was considered void.

Second-degree cases were heard by the chief of the village, assisted by a tribunal chosen from among the chiefs or elders of neighboring friendly villages, known for their integrity and competence in jurisprudence. Cases involving punishments equivalent to more than two buffaloes are heard in second-degree tribunals.[10]

The French administration allowed the basic, traditional system to continue, reinforcing the authority of the Stieng village chief, a heretofore purely nominal position.[11] On the village, district, and provincial levels, a special system of courts was established under the French to adjudicate tribal matters. In the village, the chief presided over the village court and decided the sentences. His sentences could be reviewed on the district level. Three court members were assigned to each ethnic group in a district's jurisdiction, and such groups handled only tribal matters. Each group selected a president to preside over it and the court met in the house of the district chief.[12]

Under the French, those cases that could not be resolved by the chief were sent to the Tribunal Coutumier, which convened for the first 7 days of every month. In judging the cases brought before the tribunal, the chief judge relied on the numerous traditional tribal customs.[13] The tribunal dealt only with cases in which both parties were Stieng tribespeople. Cases involving Vietnamese and Stieng were the responsibility of the province chief, but provincial authorities tried not to interfere with the operation of the tribunal.

The legal system instituted by the French still governs the Montagnard tribes, but steps have been taken by the Vietnamese Government to revise the legislative code in the tribal areas. Under the Diem regime, an attempt was made to substitute Vietnamese laws for the tribal practices. This attempt was connected with Vietnamese efforts to politically integrate the tribal people into the Republic of Vietnam.

In March 1965, the Vietnamese Government promulgated a decree restoring the legal status of the tribal laws and tribunals. Under this new decree, there will be courts at the village, district, and province levels which will be responsible for civil affairs, Montagnard affairs, and penal offenses when all parties involved are Montagnards.[14]

Village customs law courts, consisting of the village administrative committee chief aided by two tribal assistants, will conduct weekly court sessions.[15] When a case is reviewed and a decision reached by this court, it will be recorded and signed by the parties involved. This procedure will eliminate the right to appeal to another court. If settlement cannot be determined, the case can be referred to a higher court.[16]

District courts, governed by the president of the court (the district chief) aided by two Montagnard assistants, will hold bimonthly court sessions. Cases to be tried by the district court include those appealed by the village court and cases which are adjudged serious according to tribal customs.[17]

At the province level, a Montagnard Affairs Section will be established as part of the National Court. This section, under the jurisdiction of a Montagnard presiding judge and two assistants, will handle cases appealed from the Montagnard district courts and cases beyond the jurisdiction of the village or district courts. It will convene once or twice a month, depending upon the requirements.[18]

Subversive Influences

Factors contributing to the vulnerability of the Stieng to subversion are geographical location, historical isolation, and their traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese. Due to Viet Cong activity, effective governmental presence and control had been on the wane in the Stieng area during the early 1960's.[19]

The principal objective of subversive activity among the Stieng is to divert tribal support and allegiance from the Government to the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong also seek to control the strategic highways (National Routes 13 and 14) in the Stieng area, which are essential for communication and supply between Viet Cong bases in the tribal area and across the border in Cambodia and their military operations in the Mekong Delta.

Generally, the Viet Cong infiltrate a village and work to win the confidence of either the whole village or its key individuals. Usually a slow process, this is achieved by providing community services and by adopting tribal mores and customs.

Once the villagers' suspicions are allayed and their confidence won, the next phase is an intense propaganda program directed against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Then individuals are recruited, trained, and assigned to various Viet Cong support or combat units.[20]

When propaganda and cajolery are not effective, the Viet Cong resort to extortion and terror, which usually results in passive resistance to the Government or active support for the Viet Cong.[21]

Reportedly some Stieng served with the French at Dien Bien Phu during the Indochina War. These Stieng are proud of their accomplishments and might be effective elements of opposition against the Viet Cong; however, little specific information is available concerning the extent of current tribal opposition to subversive elements.[22]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

The principal means of information dissemination in the Stieng area is word of mouth.

No information is available at this writing concerning the number of radios in the tribal area and the degree of Stieng familiarity with them. Presumably, however, radios are no less rare among the Stieng than among other tribal groups in the Republic of Vietnam. Any radios operating in the Stieng area could pick up broadcasts from Saigon and provincial radio stations. Wherever feasible, short movies in the Stieng language covering simple subjects could be an effective means of communication.

Available reports indicate that the Stieng have no written language, although various missionary groups have attempted to devise a written language for them. No information is available concerning the success of those efforts.

So little is known about the roles of storytellers, minstrels, and criers among the Stieng that it is impossible to make a definite statement about this means of communication. Available information, however, indicates that music plays a large part in the life of the Stieng. At all religious festivals and at all other ceremonial occasions, there is music of the typical oriental five-tone scale played on gongs, which are the most valued possessions of the Stieng. Therefore, it may be advisable for personnel to have in mind both the value of gongs as gifts of friendship and respect as well as the necessity to express appreciation of Stieng music.

Apparently the Stieng prefer the colors of red and black, but they do not especially avoid any specific color.[1] The Stieng tattoos are symbolic lines and triangles, the meaning of which is not known.

Information activities should be oriented toward improving the living conditions of the Stieng as individuals, families, or villages. Information should be connected with programs explicitly beneficial to the village to elicit any cooperation. Control of disease, improvement of agriculture, and protection from Viet Cong harassment are possible themes. Care should always be taken to avoid taboo violations in the presentation of ideas.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposed civic action should take into account Stieng religious, social, and cultural traditions. Because of the Stieng political structure, all initial contacts should be made only with the village chief and the elders. In addition to considering specific social and cultural factors in developing individual civic action projects, it is essential to psychologically prepare the Stieng to accept the proposed changes. This requires detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance as to results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

Because they are village-oriented and prefer to remain isolated in their traditional way of life,[1] the Stieng respond most favorably to ideas for change presented in terms of local community betterment. Civic action proposal should stress the resulting improvement of village life rather than emphasize ethnic or cultural pride, nationalism, or political ideology. The reasons for an innovation should be thoroughly explained; the Stieng resent interference in their normal routine if they do not understand the reason for it. Current civic action programs of the Vietnamese Government include the resettlement of the Stieng into new and larger villages, the control of malaria, medical aid programs, agricultural assistance, and some attempts to educate the Stieng tribesmen.[2] These programs have not been wholly successful because of the isolation of the tribesmen, their traditional suspicion of the Vietnamese, their stubborn adherence to traditional ways, and Viet Cong interference.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in planning and implementing projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or by foreigners.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness. Projects using familiar materials and products, as much as possible, are more easily accepted by the tribesmen than projects requiring the use of strange materials or devices.

3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Projects should, ideally, lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.
6. Credit for success should be attributed to the Republic of Vietnam's civil and military authorities, as appropriate.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for personnel working with the Stieng encompass all aspects of tribal life. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all inclusive and not in the order of priority.

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
    a. Improvement of livestock quality through introduction of better breeds.
    b. Instruction in elementary veterinary techniques to improve health of animals.
    c. Introduction of improved seeds and new vegetables.
    d. Techniques to improve quality and yields of farmland.
    e. Insect and rodent control.
    f. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
2. Transportation and communication
    a. Roadbuilding and clearing of trails.
    b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.
    c. Construction of motion-picture facilities.
    d. Construction of radio broadcast and receiving stations and public-speaker systems.
3. Health and sanitation
    a. Improve village sanitation.
    b. Provide safe water supply systems.
    c. Eradicate disease-carrying insects.
    d. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment.
    e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
4. Education
    a. Provide basic literacy training.
    b. Provide basic citizenship education.
    c. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the tribesmen.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Stieng are reportedly skilled and capable fighters, both offensively and defensively. They are skilled hunters, trackers, scouts, and guides with experience which, if coupled with intensive modern training, support, and leadership, could result in the development of exceptionally effective units for jungle combat.

Organization for Defense

In the past, organized under the leadership of the village chief, the Stieng tribesmen fought well. Prior to any military action, plans were considered fully, being discussed by every villager. Women played an active supporting role by outfitting and supplying the men with weapons and food before a raid and by assisting in preparation of the almost impenetrable barricades around the village. The barricade was a formidable, circular wall of felled trees with leaves and branches facing away from the village. Many branches and pieces of bamboo were placed on top of one another and interlaced, concealing thousands of razor-sharp pointed sticks, traps, and snares to confront the enemy. The Stieng simply waited behind the barricade and picked off their enemies as they attempted to fight their way through the barricade. The density of the obstruction would render the enemy momentarily defenseless, unable to use his weapons.[1]

At present, there is no formal, adequate organization for the preparation of offensive or defensive action under modern conditions. To establish such organization, capable hunters and village chiefs who are recognized and respected among the Stieng would appear to be the persons to initiate action.

Inclination to Fight Defensively

Despite a reputation for vigorous defense the Stieng determination to defend themselves is strongly influenced by estimates of probable success. If faced with an enemy of numerical and weapon superiority, the Stieng will capitulate rather than fight, a characteristic not unique to the Stieng but common among people inadequately armed, trained, and led.

Given suitable weapons, training, and leadership, it is believed that the traditional Stieng desire to defend themselves, their families, and villages would express itself effectively.

Inclination to Fight Aggressively

Although the Stieng prefer defensive warfare, reportedly, they are aggressive if provoked; in the past they have mounted well-organized attacks on distant villages. However, the tribesmen have a history of raiding other tribes, sometimes traveling long distances by foot. In the past, Stieng raiding parties of between 100 and 200 men would set out on an expedition without any real order and, although avoiding excessive noise, without observing absolute silence. Proceeding surreptitiously through the jungle, avoiding ricefields and main roads, and camping overnight near water sources, the Stieng would time their arrival for a sudden surprise attack just before sunrise.

Weapons Utilized by Tribe

Traditionally, the Stieng have relied upon spears, swords, bill-hooks, crossbows, and poisoned arrows and were familiar with the use of traps, pits, and concealed sharpened sticks used as spiked foot traps. Some Stieng are trained in the use of modern weapons, and some have military knowledge gained from service with the French.

Because of their relatively small physical size—an average height of about 5 feet 5 inches—the tribesmen are more comfortable and adept with small light weapons, such as the AR.15 and carbines, rather than the heavier M-1 rifle or BAR. The tribesmen can use weapons easily disassembled and quickly assembled. The Stieng have a tradition of taking good care of their weapons.

The Stieng are skilled hunters and excellent marksmen. They take great pride in their careful and skilled handling of weapons. When the Stieng can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, they will generally use it well.

The Stieng can handle devices such as mortars, explosives, and mines; however, their proficiency with these weapons is limited by their lack of understanding of the more theoretical and technical aspects of timing and trajectory. Nevertheless, the Stieng are capable of being trained in the use of some sophisticated devices.

Ability to Absorb Military Instruction

The Stieng may be capable of absorbing the more basic military training and concepts better than many of the neighboring tribes, for their history shows an aptitude for such training. They are accomplished in their use of terrain, tracking, and ambush, and they are resourceful and adaptable in the jungle. The Stieng learn readily by actual demonstration of techniques and procedures. The tribesmen who have seen service with the French are an asset in the training and instruction of their fellow Stieng.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE STIENG

Every action of the Stieng tribesman has specific significance in terms of his culture. One must be careful to realize that the Stieng may not react as outsiders do. The outsider should remember that a relatively simple course of action may, for the tribesman, require not only divination but also a sacrifice.

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Stieng are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Stieng village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other principal village figures.
2. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Stieng. Promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The tribespeople usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of Stieng tribesmen quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression they are being forced to change their ways.
6. Personnel should require some form of payment for services to the tribe. Something useful to the village should be obtained from the tribespeople themselves in return for the outside assistance.
7. Tribal elders and the village chief should receive credit for projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Stieng should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. The term *moi* should not be used because it means savage and is offensive to the tribesmen.
3. Outside personnel should not refuse an offer of food or drink, especially at a religious ceremony. Once involved in a ceremony, one must eat or drink whatever is offered.
4. A gift, an invitation to a ceremony, or an invitation to enter a Stieng house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown. However, receiving gifts, participating in ceremonies, and visiting houses will serve to establish good relations with the tribespeople.
5. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Stieng ceremony, festival, or meeting from the village elders or other responsible persons.
6. An outsider should never enter a Stieng house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
7. Outsiders should not get involved with Stieng women.
8. When helping the Stieng learn new techniques, methods, and concepts, be careful to avoid seriously disrupting traditional cultural patterns.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. Do not enter a village where a religious ceremony is taking place or a religious taboo is in effect. Watch for the warning signs placed at the village entrances; when in doubt, do not enter.
2. As soon as possible, identify any sacred trees, stones, or other sacred objects in the village; do not touch or tamper with them. The Stieng believe these sacred objects house powerful spirits. For example, if a sacred rock is touched without due ceremony, the village may have to be moved or expensive sacrifices may have to be made.
3. Do not mock Stieng religious beliefs in any way; these beliefs are the cornerstone of Stieng life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Stieng property and village animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for. An outsider should avoid borrowing from the tribesmen. Animals should not be treated brutally or taken without the owner's permission.

2. Difficult, rigorous work should be done early in the morning, from dawn to 10:30 or 11:00 A.M. A nap during the middle of the day is customary, and light work is done in the afternoon.
3. Learn simple phrases in the Stieng language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the Stieng.

Health and Welfare

1. The Stieng are becoming aware of the benefits of medicine and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Stieng areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentry, yaws, trachoma, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. T. Gerber, "Coutumier stieng," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1951), p. 227; Richard L. Phillips, "Here are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers*, XV (Summer 1962), p. 13; M. Georges Maspéro, *The Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS: 13443) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962), p. 71; Wesley R. Fishel (ed.), *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 98.
2. David Thomas, "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam" (University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 4.
3. R. P. Henri Azemar, "Les Stiengs de Brolam," *Excursions et Reconnaissances*, XII (Saigon: 1886), p. 7.
4. Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 227; Azemar, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–8; Irving Kopf, Personal Communication, July 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; entensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.] U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964), p. 211.

II. TRIBAL BACKGROUND

1. Frank M. Lebar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 94.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 153–57.
3. Azemar, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6.
4. Henri Maître, *Les Jungles moi* (Paris: Émile Larose, 1912), p. 407.
5. Louis Malleret, "Quelques légendes des Moi de Cochinchine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXI (1946), pp. 61–62.
6. Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), p. 68.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–82.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
10. Kopf, *op. cit.*
11. Azemar, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–20.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.
13. *Ibid.;* Maître, *op. cit.*, p. 101; Kopf, *op. cit.*

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Azemar, *op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.
2. Kopf, *op. cit.*
3. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 109–31.
4. Pierre Delbove, "Le Paludisme et les Moi (Note à propos de l'article de M. Raulin sur l'Évolution des Stieng de la délégation de Honquan)," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXII (1947), p. 109.
5. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–24.
8. Kopf, *op. cit.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. Azemar, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
12. Kopf, *op. cit.*
13. Azemar, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–14; Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 227–28.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–29.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
3. Kopf, *op. cit.*
4. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–63.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
6. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–77.
7. Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 229–30.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
2. Azemar, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34.
3. Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
5. Azemar, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

VI. RELIGION

1. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950), pp. 1130–37.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–37.
5. Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 957; Bourotte, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41.
6. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
7. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–37.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–29.
2. Azemar, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–54; Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, pp. 1012–13.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Kopf, *op. cit.*
5. Henri-Pierre Raulin, "Les Techniques de la percussion et la production du feu chez les Stieng," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXII (1947), p. 121.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
7. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 236–37.
8. Kopf, *op. cit.*
9. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 266–68.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 227–28.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–28.
3. Azemar, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
4. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–27.
5. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
6. Paul P. Guilleminet, *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum* (Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952), p. 228.
7. Gerber, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 238–39.
9. Guilleminet, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
10. Gerber, *op. cit.*, pp. 238–39.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
12. John D. Donoghue, Daniel D. Whitney, and Iwao Ishina. *People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962), pp. 69–70.
13. Gerald C. Hickey, *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau* (Saigon: Michigan State University Advisory Group, 1957), pp. 20–21.
14. ———. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands" (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965), p. 1.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Washington Post*, July 7, 1965, p. A–14.
20. Malcolm W. Browne, *The New Face of War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 72–74.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–43.
22. Kopf, *op. cit.*

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Azemar, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

1. Henri-Pierre Raulin, "L'Évolution des Stieng de la délégation de Honquan," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXI (1946), p. 70.
2. Kopf, *op. cit.*

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Azemar, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE STIENG

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Azemar, R. P. Henri. "Dictionnaire stieng: Recueil de 2,500 mots," *Excursions et Reconnaissances*, XII (Saigon: 1886), 99–146, 251–341.

———. "Les Stiengs de Brolam," *Excursions et Reconnaissances*, XII (Saigon: 1886), 5–54.

Baudrit, A. "Le fameux Song-Be," *Bulletin de la Société de Études Indochinoises*, XI (1936), 7–41.

Bourotte, Bernard. "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX (1955), 1–133.

Browne, Malcolm W. *The New Face of War*. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Charbonneau. "Pénétration en pays muong et stieng insoumis (1931–1933)," *Revue des Troupes Coloniales* (1934), 619–49.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dornes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie*, Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China*. Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

De Barthelemy, P. "Un Voyage chez les Mois-Stiengs vivant au pied de la Chaine Djambra," *Revue Indochinoise* CXXIX (Hanoi: 1901), 300–302; CXXX (Hanoi: 1901), 327–28.

Delbove, Pierre. "Le Paludisme et les Moi (Note à propos de l'article de M. Raulin sur l'Évolution des Stieng de la délégation de Honquan)," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXII (1947), 109.

Donoghue, John D., Whitney, Daniel D., and Ishina, Iwao. *.People in the Middle: The Rhade of South Vietnam*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1962.

Fishel, Wesley R. (ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Gerber, T. "Coutumier stieng," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLV (1951), 227–70.

Guilleminet, Paul P. *Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jaray de la province de Kontum*. Hanoi: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, and Paris: E. de Boccard, 1952.

Harris, George L., *et al. U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam*. Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Hickey, Gerald C. "Comments on Recent GVN Legislation Concerning Montagnard Common Law Courts in the Central Vietnamese Highlands." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, June 8, 1965.

———. "Comments on Y Bham's Address—15 March 1965." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

———. "Material on Kontum Province." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation Memorandum, March 17, 1965.

———. "Montagnard Agriculture and Land Tenure." Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, OSD/ARPA R & D Field Unit, April 2, 1965.

———. *Preliminary Research Report on the High Plateau*. Saigon: Michigan State University Advisory Group, 1957.

Kopf, Irving. Personal Communication. July 1965. [Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University; extensive U.S. Government service in tribal areas of Vietnam.]

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Maître, Henri. *Les Jungles moi.* Paris: Émile Larose, 1912.

———. *Les Régions moi du Sud Indo-Chinois.* Paris: Librairie Plon, 1909.

Malleret, Louis. "Quelques légendes des Moi de Cochinchine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXI (1946), 61–65.

Marquis, E. "Au Pays de Stieng et de Cho-Ma," *Asie Nouvelle Illustrée,* XIII (December 1933), 9–18.

Maspéro, M. Georges. *The Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS: 13443). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962.

Phillips, Richard L. "Here are the Tribes," *Jungle Frontiers,* XV (Summer 1962), 13.

Raulin, Henri-Pierre. "L'Évolution des Stieng de la délégation de Honquan," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXI (1946), 67–71.

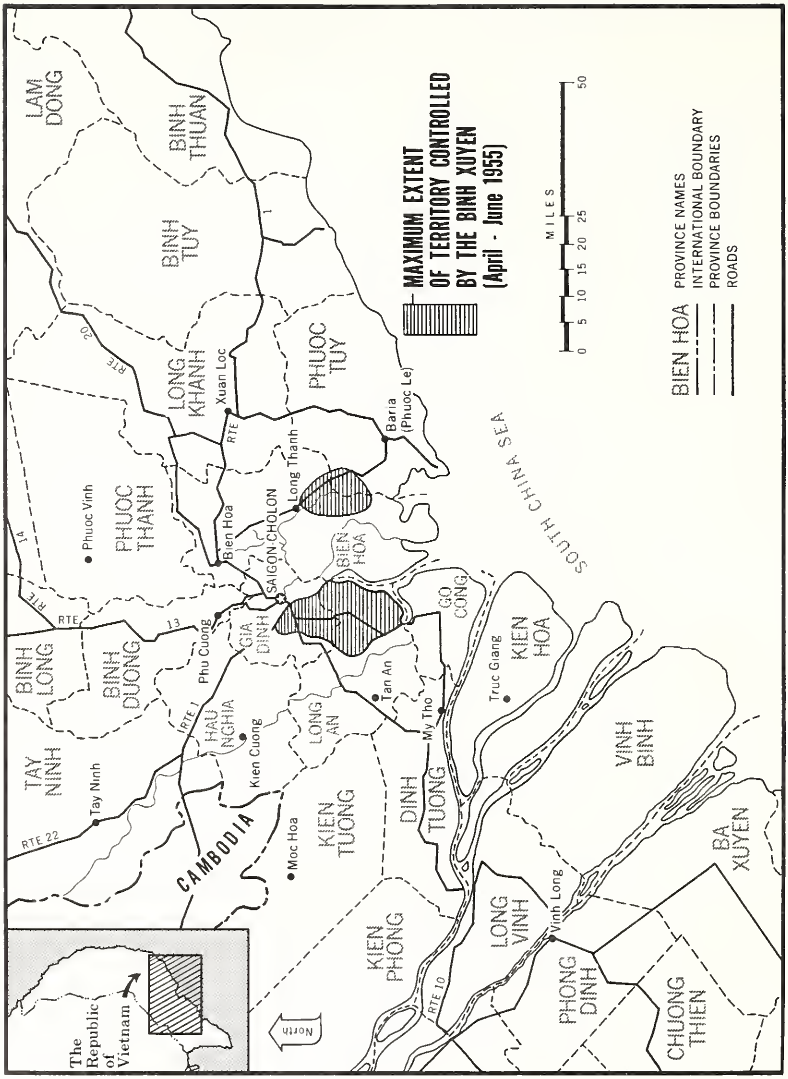
———. "Les Techniques de la percussion et la production du feu chez les Stieng," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXII (1947), 111–21.

Thomas, David. "Mon-Khmer Subgroupings in Vietnam." University of North Dakota: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1964.

Vailant, L. *Variétés sur les Mois.* Saigon: Ouvrage Édition du Gouvernement de la Cochinchine, Imprimerie Arden, 1935.

Washington Post, July 7, 1965, A–14.


MAXIMUM EXTENT OF TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE BINH XUYEN (April - June 1955)
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
BIEN HOA PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
SOUTH CHINA SEA
CAMBODIA
North
The Republic of Vietnam
LAM DONG
BINH THUAN
BINH TUY
LONG KHANH
PHUOC TUY
PHUOC THANH
BINH LONG
BINH DUONG
TAY NINH
HAU NGHIA
GIA DINH
BIEN HOA
LONG AN
KIEN TUONG
DINH TUONG
GO CONG
KIEN HOA
VINH BINH
KIEN PHONG
LONG VINH
PHONG DINH
CHUONG THIEN
BA XUYEN
Xuan Loc
Baria (Phuoc Le)
Long Thanh
Bien Hoa
SAIGON-CHOLON
Phuoc Vinh
Phu Cuong
Tay Ninh
Kien Cuong
Moc Hoa
Tan An
My Tho
Truc Giang
Vinh Long
RTE 20
RTE 1
RTE 14
RTE 13
RTE 22
RTE 10
RTE

The Binh Xuyen

PART TWO. OTHER MINORITY GROUPS

CHAPTER 19. THE BINH XUYEN

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Named for the town south of Cholon where the movement originated, the Binh Xuyen operated clandestinely as a band of river pirates in an area bounded on the west by the Soi Rap River, on the east by the Baria-Long Thanh highway, and on the north by the Phuoc Thanh, Phuoc An, Long Thanh highway until August 1945, when the group came into public view.[1] After World War II, the Binh Xuyen began organizing on a territorial basis, finally attaining a position of considerable political and military importance.* Frequently mislabeled a "sect," the Binh Xuyen actually lacked the religious base implicit in the title of sect and fundamental to organizations like the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao.† Additionally, the Binh Xuyen, unlike the sects, sought no popular support, but derived its funds from banditry and vice racketeering.[2]

Under the leadership of Le Van Vien (alias Bay Vien), the Binh Xuyen, numbering between 1,000 and 3,000, cooperated initially with the Viet Minh against the French during the Indochina War (1946–1954); but in 1948 they rallied to the side of the French and fought effectively against the Communists.[3]

Le Van Vien eventually became director of the "Grand Monde," one of Asia's largest gambling establishments, and was rewarded for his cooperation with the French by receiving a commission as a brigadier general in the auxiliary forces of the Vietnamese National Army. In 1953, the Binh Xuyen, backed by Emperor Bao Dai, reached the zenith of its power when it received nine seats in the National Congress called by the Emperor. By this time the Binh Xuyen had also gained control of the Saigon city civil administration and police force.[4] By 1954, they operated lucrative gambling and prostitution establishments in Saigon and controlled the opium trade, much of the fish and charcoal commerce, and several hotels and rubber plantations.

---

* The Binh Xuyen controlled areas of Vietnam as semiautonomous fiefs. They collected taxes from the local population and ran local administration systems.

† The Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects are examined in separate chapters in this volume.

In the army crisis of September 1954, the Binh Xuyen aligned itself with Premier Ngo Dinh Diem against the Chief of Staff Gen. Nguyen Van Hinh, who was suspected of plotting against Diem and was backed by the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao.[5] A few days later, the Binh Xuyen switched its allegiance to Hinh and in March 1955 joined the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao in forming a United Front of National Forces, a loose coalition. The Front sent a mission to Bao Dai, requesting the resignation of Diem, and issued an ultimatum to Diem, giving him 5 days to form a government of national union.[6] Diem's refusal to acquiesce to the demands of the Front resulted in a Binh Xuyen attack on the presidential palace on March 29, 1955.* The French intervened in the conflict and temporarily halted the fighting,[7] but renewed hostilities broke out a short time later when the National Army initiated military action against the Binh Xuyen. By May 1955, Government troops had pushed the Binh Xuyen from the Saigon-Cholon area into the swamps of Bien Hoa and Phuoc Tuy Provinces. Le Van Vien fled to Paris and the power of the Binh Xuyen had been smashed.[8]

According to one source, members of the Binh Xuyen who had escaped Diem's campaign and had been driven underground were included in the National Liberation Front at its foundation in 1960.[9] Subsequent reports seem to confirm that small Binh Xuyen groups are cooperating with the Viet Cong.[10]

---

* The Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, sensing a change in the political atmosphere, defected to Diem's side just prior to the conflict.

SECTION II

EARLY HISTORY AND STATUS DURING THE INDOCHINA WAR

For centuries it was customary for the Binh Xuyen, who inhabited a desolate, unproductive region south of Cholon, to raid their richer neighbors after harvesttime and steal enough to sustain themselves until the next harvest. The Binh Xuyen were simply river pirates or bandits who operated on a small scale from swamp hideouts.[1] When they moved into urban areas they were chiefly concerned with organizing vice rackets and exacting protection money from wealthy Chinese. However, the breakdown in public security following the Japanese occupation (1940–1945) and the release of prisoners from the Cochin-Chinese prisons afforded them an opportunity to extend their activities.[2] In August and September of 1945, the Binh Xuyen first attracted public attention when their representatives participated in ceremonial marches, bearing an enormous green banner on which was inscribed "Binh Xuyen Bandits." [3]

In 1945, the Binh Xuyen leaders,* imbued with the extreme patriotism which swept Vietnam after World War II, joined the Viet Minh. One of the Binh Xuyen leaders, Le Van Vien (Bay Vien), was made director of municipal affairs and, in this capacity, raised a considerable sum of money for the military activities of the Viet Minh's Nam Bo (Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam). Impressed by this demonstration of efficiency, Tran Van Giau, the Viet Minh military commander, presented Vien with a list of persons to assassinate. Vien, shocked by the lengths to which the Communists were willing to go to consolidate their position, refused to carry out the assassinations.[4] The Binh Xuyen leaders managed to retain a degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the Nam Bo [5] and, when the Committee was forced to leave Saigon-Cholon, the Binh Xuyen retreated to their former operational zone. At this time Vien refused to allow his 1,300 armed men to be incorporated into the Viet Minh forces.[6]

Annoyed by the separatist tendencies of the Binh Xuyen, the Viet Minh, under the new commander Nguyen Binh, sought to eliminate, by means of "suicide squads," members of the group who eluded their control.[7] The conflict between the Viet Minh and Binh Xuyen reached a climax in April 1946 at the time of the creation of the "United National Front," an anti-Communist and anti-French coalition which the Binh Xuyen joined. Nguyen Binh was intent on dissolving this group and reducing the power of Le Van Vien, while the latter remained on his guard against the Viet Minh as well as the French Expeditionary Corps.[8]

---

* The most renowned of these were: Duong Van Duong (killed in February 1946), Le Van Vien, Duong Van Ha, Muoi Tri, and Tu Ty.

Lured by a promise of promotion within the Viet Minh, Le Van Vien, after much hesitation, accepted an invitation from the Nam Bo to go to the Plaine des Joncs for official acceptance of his new position. On May 20, 1946 Vien left Rung Sat (an area west of Baria under Binh Xuyen control), for the Plaine des Joncs. Still suspicious of Viet Minh motives, Vien took with him an escort of 200 loyal armed men.[9] Received with great fanfare and demonstrations of friendship, Vien accepted the position of "Khu Truong Khu 7" (Commander of Viet Minh Military Zone 7—east of Saigon) in the presence of Communist officials from Viet Minh Zones 8 and 9 who had convened for the occasion. All went well until Vien learned that some of his troops east of the Soi Rap River had been disarmed on Nguyen Binh's orders. The latter reassured Vien of his intentions, while making certain that Vien would be detained and his escort eliminated.

Vien escaped from the Viet Minh and on June 10 reached Bien Hoa, where he discovered that his fief was occupied by Viet Minh forces and he could not return. Without delay, Vien sent two envoys to the French with a letter containing two requests: permission to pass through the French-held area to reach the banks of the Soi Rap, and French Army assistance in clearing the Viet Minh out of his domain. In return, he agreed to accept the French conditions to "rally"—e.g., surrender at a price. The first request was granted and the second was to be discussed on Vien's arrival on the scene for the proposed negotiations.[10] After several conferences, Vien agreed to rally to the side of the Bao Dai Government and to recognize the French Union.[11] On June 17, Vien proclaimed himself violently anti-Communist, and a few days later regained control of Cholon as well as his fief. The French had given official recognition to the Binh Xuyen and granted it independent control of the region.[12] A few days later, Tran Van Huu (President under Bao Dai), named Vien Colonel of the Guard of Vietnam, and the Binh Xuyen received the official name of "Binh Xuyen National Armed Forces." The group was marked henceforth by its *esprit de corps,* demonstrated by its own music and flag (a yellow star on a green ground, bordered in red).[13] Vien began to enter politics and was soon well known around Saigon.

His troops were situated along the roads leading from the capital, where they collected "road safety taxes" on cars and buses and from farmers bringing produce to market.[14]

In 1949, Le Van Vien headed a consortium which bought control of two of Asia's largest gambling and prostitution concessions—the "Grand Monde" in Cholon and the "Cloche d'Or" in Saigon—and Vien assumed the position of director of the establishments.[15]

Vien became fanatically anti-Communist in his activities. In 1950, when Viet Minh bombs rocked Saigon nightly, Cholon, policed by the Binh Xuyen (who were paid by the wealthy Chinese), remained quiet. In an effort to stabilize Saigon, the French granted permission to the Binh Xuyen to police the capital; the Binh Xuyen cleared the terrorists out of Saigon.[16] In return, Vien was promoted in 1952 to the rank of Brigadier General in the auxiliary forces of the Vietnamese National Army.[17] In February 1953, Binh Xuyen military activities received an additional boost when Vien was authorized to form a battalion of troops to police the Long Thanh highway from Saigon to the coast.[18] In addition, the Binh Xuyen were allowed to occupy three posts on the Saigon River to ensure the safe flow of traffic along this important artery.[19]

On July 3, 1953, the French made a "solemn declaration" of their willingness to complete the independence of Vietnam by transfer-hitherto under French control. In return, the declaration invited ring to the Vietnamese Government (under Bao Dai) the functions the Vietnamese Government to settle its claims in the economic, financial, judicial, military, and political spheres. The Vietnamese nationalists, dissatisfied with Bao Dai's conduct of affairs, realized that the negotiations would be completed without regard for their wishes. Although divided by personal rivalries, they sought a means of demonstrating the importance of their claims. Ngo Dinh Nhu seized this opportunity to form an unofficial front of national union to support his brother Ngo Dinh Diem as candidate for the premiership and to demonstrate the desire of the Vietnamese to have a voice in the direction of national affairs. The leaders of the religious sects and the Binh Xuyen gave their support to the plan, and Le Van Vien was persuaded to offer his headquarters as the site for the congress. On September 5, a national congress in support of "national union and peace" met in semiclandestine fashion. When the discussions turned to violent indictments of the French authorities and Bao Dai, Le Van Vien ordered his troops to clear the hall. The religious sect leaders attempted to quell the ensuing scandal by assuring Bao Dai of their loyalty.

To erase the impression of popular discontent created by the September congress and to ensure his claim to represent the Vietnamese nationalists in negotiations with the French Government, Bao Dai summoned an official National Congress on October 1, 1953. The Binh Xuyen reached the peak of its career at this time: nine seats, more than those reserved for the Buddhists or the ethnic minorities, were allocated to members of the Binh Xuyen. The delegates were instructed to make known to Bao Dai the desires of the Vietnamese people concerning future relations with France "within the framework of the French Union" and to appoint members to assist him in the negotiations. Instead, the National Congress unanimously approved a motion (which was later amended) in support of total independence for Vietnam.[20]

The following April, a member of the Binh Xuyen (Lai Huu Sang) was appointed director-general of the Saigon-Cholon police and security services—presumably the price for Binh Xuyen allegiance to the Government. The group, then in charge of public security, was officially obligated to control activities on which its own power was founded.[21]

Thus by the end of the Indochina War, the Binh Xuyen, which had gained a following estimated between 5,000 and 8,000, maintained semiautonomous fiefs to the south and southeast of Cholon, controlled the Saigon-Cholon police, ran lucrative gambling and prostitution establishments, and controlled the opium trade, much of the fish and charcoal commerce, and several hotels and plantations.

SECTION III

STATUS DURING THE DIEM REGIME

Among the most pressing problems facing Ngo Dinh Diem when he was called to office by Bao Dai in June 1954 was the existence of the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen, who held sway over vast quasi-autonomous territories. Charged with the task of unifying southern Vietnam, Dien realized he had to break the power of the sects and the Binh Xuyen, whose interests conflicted with his own. He had two alternatives: he could either eliminate these groups or integrate them into the body politic. In either case, he needed a strong, loyal army.

The Army Chief of Staff at the time was Gen. Nguyen Van Hinh, a French citizen, whom Diem suspected of conspiring against him. On September 11, 1954, Diem demanded Hinh's resignation, initiating a 7-week army crisis. Hinh refused to accede to Diem's order and barricaded himself in his headquarters. Fear of a coup d'etat or an attempt on his life forced Diem to withdraw to his palace. Ironically, Diem's guards were under the control of the Binh Xuyen, of whom he strongly disapproved because of their affiliation with gambling and prostitution. The Binh Xuyen, however, were willing to defend Diem, at least temporarily, for two reasons: loyalty to Bao Dai, and therefore to Diem, his appointee; and rivalry with the National Army.* [1]

During the crisis, Diem's administrative power was reduced to impotence when Hinh demonstrated the strength of his position by ordering troops to patrol the capital. It was evident in the beginning that Hinh could execute a coup d'etat with considerable ease, but he showed reluctance to do so and instead sought to temporize.[2] Less than a week later, the Binh Xuyen switched allegiance and joined the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao in support of Hinh. In a manifesto dated September 16, the sects and the Binh Xuyen officially dissociated themselves from Diem and declared the need for a democratic government, liberation of the country from foreign domination and enactment of measures to eliminate poverty and illiteracy. In order to appease Hinh, Diem appointed Gen. Nguyen Van Xuan to the Ministry of National Defense. Pleased with the appointment, Hinh agreed not to take action and asked Bao Dai to arbitrate the disagreement between the sects, the Binh Xuyen, and Diem.[3]

---

* General Hinh's father, Nguyen Van Tam, had organized the Security Service and controlled the police. When the Binh Xuyen gained control of the police, many security investigators joined the Vietnamese National Army.

Hinh was, however, warned that a military coup d'etat would result in the halting of foreign economic and military aid. Bao Dai, hoping to end the crisis, sent for Le Van Vien and ordered him to form a coalition government with the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao leaders. The sect leaders, however, made demands unacceptable to Le Van Vien, who accused them of selling their services to Prime Minister Diem.

The accusation was well founded, for on September 24 Diem persuaded the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao to accept four seats each in his new Cabinet.* [4] Cao Dai and Hoa Hao unwillingness to concede leadership in the coalition government to Vien, and the refusal of the latter to finance Cao Dai and Hoa Hao activities after their loss of French subsidies, caused the leaders of the religious sects to defect, at least nominally, to Diem.[5] The Binh Xuyen, however, since they still controlled the National Police, refused to enter the new Government.[6] The army crisis ended when Hinh was finally dismissed, and a temporary calm reigned over the country.

Diem dealt another blow to the power of the Binh Xuyen when, in his campaign against vice and corruption, he refused to renew the licenses of the "Grand Monde" and "Cloche d'Or" when they expired on January 15, 1955. The equivalent of over $200 million had changed hands in these establishments over the preceding 8 years. Vien, who personally had received about $14,000 a day in "taxes" from the "Grand Monde" alone, was charged, as head of the police, with the task of closing these gambling and prostitution centers. Vien apparently accepted the decision, regretting only that the Government was willing to lose such an important source of revenue.[7]

Meanwhile the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen maintained an uneasy truce, broken by frequent clashes when one group trespassed on another's domain. Fearing that sectarian differences would result in the weakening of their resistance against Diem's demands, Bao Dai urged the sects and the Binh Xuyen to unify. On March 5, 1955, the three groups, totaling 25,000 men, formed the United Front of National Forces, an anti-Government coalition to promote the formation of a democratic government.[8] The Front requested Bao Dai to dismiss Diem and to turn over the reins of power to them; on March 21, they issued an ultimatum giving Diem 5 days to form a "strong, honest, democratic government of national union." Diem refused and took the precautionary measure of ordering three battalions of militia troops to Saigon, and Bao Dai reaffirmed his support of Diem. At the expiration of the ultimatum, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao representatives resigned from the Cabinet.[9]

---

* Nine of Diem's ministers had resigned on September 20, further weakening his position.

In retaliation for Diem's refusal to comply with the ultimatum, the Hoa Hao held up food supplies for Saigon-Cholon, and the Binh Xuyen established themselves in the police and security headquarters and in other buildings in the twin cities. Diem ordered paratroops to occupy the police and security headquarters. They ousted the Binh Xuyen from the police headquarters without difficulty, but could not force the commandos from the Security Service building. On March 28, Diem ordered Col. Cao Van Tri, the paratroop commander, to attack the building. The French intervened in the attack, causing the postponement of hostilities until the night of March 29–30. Unable to bury their differences, the religious sects soon accused the Binh Xuyen of forcing them into open conflict with Diem. Sensing an impending showdown, the Cao Dai and most of the Hoa Hao backed out of the conflict on March 29, leaving only the Binh Xuyen to confront the National Army. On the night of March 29–30, fighting broke out between the Binh Xuyen and the Army. The French soon arranged a cease-fire, to Diem's annoyance. The Prime Minister accused the French of secretly supporting the religious sects and the Binh Xuyen; rumor was rife that the French had given the Binh Xuyen tactical advice during the affray.[10]

By April 1955, Diem was prepared for a showdown with the Binh Xuyen and the remaining dissident Hoa Hao. Meanwhile, the Binh Xuyen commando units under Vien, who now proclaimed himself "Commander in Chief of the Opposition,"* still held the Security Service building in Saigon and interrupted the routine examination of passports at the airfield and port. The Ministry of Finance (adjacent to the Security Service headquarters), the police headquarters, and the port office were under National Army occupation.[11] At first Diem tried to break the Binh Xuyen power by means of verbal persuasion. On April 3, he made a radio appeal to the members of the Binh Xuyen, encouraging them to desert the armed organization and promising them amnesty. The Binh Xuyen lifted their 3-day food blockade, but they refused to relinquish the Security Service building.[12] When no Binh Xuyen soldiers deserted to the Government, stronger measures were enacted. Plainclothes operatives of the Binh Xuyen were to be searched for illegal arms caches, and a psychological operations program, a "murmuring" campaign, was to be initiated against the Binh Xuyen militia. Binh Xuyen soldiers were to receive 5,000 piasters ($142) if they surrendered to the Government with their arms. Meanwhile, a 6-day truce had been arranged with the Binh Xuyen so that no known Binh Xuyen strongholds would be attacked. The French promised to induce the organization to hand over the Security building to the Government by peaceful means.[13] When none of these measures proved effective, Diem dismissed the Binh Xuyen director-general of the Security Service, Lai Huu Sang, and ordered members of the Service to report to the new director within 48 hours or face court-martial. Furthermore, by the end of this same period, Binh Xuyen troops would no longer be permitted free circulation in Saigon-Cholon.

---

* The *New York Times* (April 1, 1955) reported that Vien had 8,000–10,000 men under arms.

The truce ended April 28 and fighting between the Binh Xuyen and the National Army broke out once more. The French Commander urged Diem to call for a cease-fire, but the Prime Minister, who believed that the power of the Binh Xuyen would have been smashed in March had fighting been allowed to continue, refused. In order to ensure the defeat of the Binh Xuyen this time, Diem ordered 4 battalions of paratroops and an armored car squadron into the battle, keeping in reserve 14 battalions plus an unknown number of reinforcements from central Vietnam. The Binh Xuyen, estimated to number 2,000, were entrenched in various buildings throughout Saigon-Cholon. Anticipating French intervention, Le Van Vien refused to call on his 4,000 reserves and failed to organize an effective resistance. Accordingly, the high school, the cinema, and the printing works—the last three centers of Binh Xuyen resistance—fell to the paratroops early on April 29. By midnight the Binh Xuyen resistance had collapsed, paratroops occupied Vien's headquarters, and the Binh Xuyen, including Vien, had fled. The eviction of the Binh Xuyen from Cholon was attributed to their neglect of military training, incompetent officers, outdated arms, and the willingness of the National Army to defend Diem.[14]

Fearing that the Binh Xuyen might reorganize, the Government sought to expel Vien and his remaining battalions from the swamp hideouts in the Rung Sat area south of Saigon-Cholon, where they had retreated after their eviction from the twin cities. In May, Government troops blocked the approaches to the Rung Sat area, and awaited the desertion of soldiers capable of providing information on the military strength and location of the Binh Xuyen. By September 1955, the remaining Binh Xuyen troops were cleared out of the Rung Sat area. Le Van Vien escaped to France with French assistance.[15]

Government troops were now free to continue their offensive against the remaining dissident Hoa Hao and Cao Dai groups. By October 1955, the power of the sects and the Binh Xuyen had collapsed.

SECTION IV

STATUS SINCE THE DIEM REGIME

Since Diem's defeat of the Binh Xuyen in 1955, little information has appeared concerning the group's activities. Former Binh Xuyen members were included in the Committee for Liberty and Progress, the "Caravelle" group, which issued a manifesto to Diem on April 26, 1960, requesting a liberalization of the regime.[1]

A week after the overthrow of Diem in 1964, Gen. Nguyen Khanh released seven leading members of the Binh Xuyen and Cao Dai who had been imprisoned by Diem.

The Binh Xuyen may never regain the power they once had. Remnants of the group, however, are known to remain hostile to the Government. Most accounts of Binh Xuyen activity refer to incidents of individual rather than organized banditry.[2] According to one source, members of the religious sects and the Binh Xuyen who escaped Diem's persecution and were operating underground were included in the formation of the National Liberation Front in 1960.[3] At present an undertermined number of Binh Xuyen are known to be cooperating with the Viet Cong.[4]

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Maj. A. M. Savani, *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam* (Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre-Mer, 1953), p. 117; Donald Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indochina* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 137.
2. George L. Harris, *et al.*, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962), p. 326.
3. Ellen Joy Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 285 and *The Struggle for Indochina Continues: Geneva to Bandung* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 24.
4. Bernard B. Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," *Pacific Affairs*, XXVIII, 3 (September 1955), p. 250.
5. Roy Jumper, "Sects and Communism in South Vietnam," *Orbis*, III, 1 (Spring 1959), p. 87.
6. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
7. Joseph Buttinger, "Are We Saving South Viet-Nam?," *The New Leader* XXXVIII, Supplement, 26 (June 27, 1955), pp. 1–15.
8. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 253; Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
9. Wilfred G. Burchett, *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 95.
10. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

II. EARLY HISTORY AND STATUS DURING THE INDOCHINA WAR

1. Peter Schmid, "Free Indo-China Fights Against Time: Vietnam's Winding, Rocky Road," *Commentary*, XVIV, 1 (January 1955), 18–29.
2. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
3. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
5. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
6. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
7. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
8. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
9. Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
10. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
11. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 122; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 192; Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina*, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–30.
12. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 122; Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 250.
13. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 122; Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
14. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

15. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 250; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 379.
16. Schmid, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
17. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 250; Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
18. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 277; Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
19. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
20. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 275–78.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

III. STATUS DURING THE DIEM REGIME

1. Brian Crozier, "The Diem Regime in Southern Vietnam," *Far Eastern Survey*, XXIV, 4 (April 1955), p. 51.
2. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 349; Crozier, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
3. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 349.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 350.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 351.
6. Tillman Durdin, "Sects to Get Posts in Saigon Cabinet," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1954, p. 6, col. 3.
7. Crozier, *op. cit.*, p. 52; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 379.
8. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 384; "Private Armies Unite in Vietnam," *The New York Times*, March 5, 1955, p. 1.
9. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 384.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 385.
11. Tillman Durdin, "Sect's Army Joins Vietnam Premier," *The New York Times*, April 1, 1955, p. 1; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 387.
12. Robert Alden, "French Mediate in Vietnam Crisis," *The New York Times*, April 4, 1955; p. 3, col. 1.
13. Robert Alden, "Police in Saigon to Look for Arms," *The New York Times*, April 7, 1955, p. 10, col. 1.
14. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 387–89.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 393–97.

IV. STATUS SINCE THE DIEM REGIME

1. Wesley R. Fishel, "Problems of Democratic Growth in Free Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence*, edited by Wesley R. Fishel (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 28.
2. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
3. Burchett, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
4. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alden, Robert. "French Mediate in Vietnam Crisis," *The New York Times*, April 4, 1955, p. 3, col. 1.

———. "Police in Saigon to Look for Arms," *The New York Times*, April 7, 1955, p. 10, col. 1.

———. "Sect Head Bars Vietnam Fealty," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1955, p. 2, col. 5.

Burchett, Wilfred G. *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1963.

Buttinger, Joseph. "Are We Saving South Viet-Nam?," *The New Leader* XXXVIII, Supplement, 26 (June 27, 1955), 1–15.

Crozier, Brian. "The Diem Regime in Southern Vietnam," *Far Eastern Survey*, XXIV, 4 (April 1955), 49–56.

Durdin, Tillman. "Premier Revises Vietnam Cabinet," *The New York Times*, September 25, 1954, p. 3, col. 2.

———. "Sect's Army Joins Vietnam Premier," *The New York Times*, April 1, 1955, p. 1.

———. "Sects to Get Posts in Saigon Cabinet," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1954, p. 6, col. 3.

Fall, Bernard B. "Indochina Since Geneva," *Pacific Affairs*, XXVIII, 1 (March 1955), 3–25.

———. "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," *Pacific Affairs*, XXVIII, 3 (September 1955), 235–53.

———. *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963.

Fishel, Wesley R. "Problems of Democratic Growth in Free Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* Edited by Wesley R. Fishel. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, 9–28.

———(ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Hammer, Ellen Joy. *The Struggle for Indochina.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954.

———. *The Struggle for Indochina Continues: Geneva to Bandung.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955.

Harris, George L., *et al. U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Jones, P. H. M. "Khanh in Command," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XLIV, 5 (April 30, 1964), 239–41.

Jumper, Roy. "Sects and Communism in South Vietnam," *Orbis*, III, 1 (Spring 1959), 88–93.

Lancaster, Donald. *The Emancipation of French Indochina.* London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Levy, Roger. *Viet-Nam, Cambodge, Laos (1954–1957).* Paris: Centre d'Études de Politique Etrangère Comité d'Études des Problèmes du Pacifique, 1957.

"Private Armies Unite in Vietnam," *The New York Times*, March 5, 1955, p. 1.

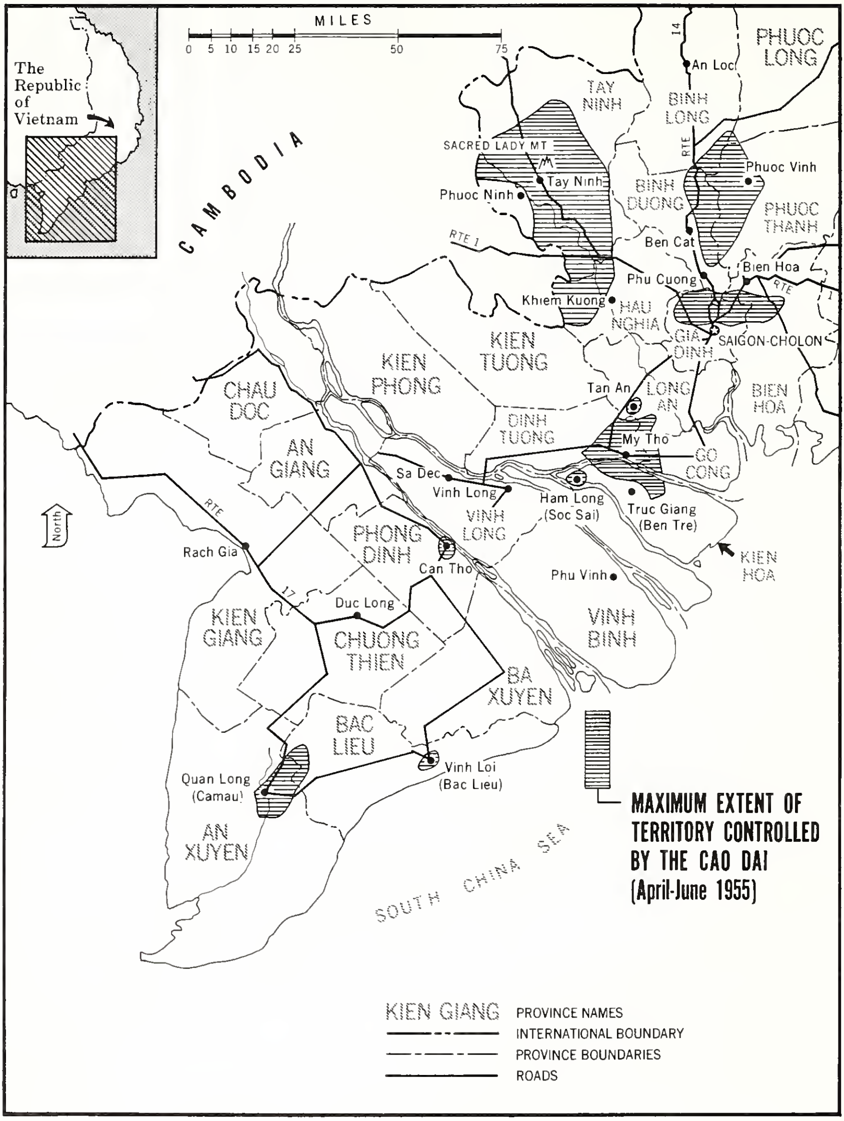
Savani, Major A. M. *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam.* Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre Mer, 1953.

Schmid, Peter. "Free Indo-China Fights Against Time: Vietnam's Winding, Rocky Road," *Commentary*, XVIV, 1 (January 1955), 18–29.

Scigliano, Robert G. *South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.

Sulzberger, Cyrus L. "Foreign Affairs: A Stain that Needs to be Erased," *The New York Times*, March 14, 1955, p. 22, col. 5.

Tas, Sal. "Behind the Fighting in South Vietnam," *The New Leader*, XXXVIII (May 9, 1955), 11–12.


The Republic of Vietnam
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50 75
CAMBODIA
TAY NINH
SACRED LADY MT
Tay Ninh
Phuoc Ninh
RTE 1
14
An Loc
BINH LONG
RTE
PHUOC LONG
Phuoc Vinh
PHUOC THANH
BINH DUONG
Ben Cat
Bien Hoa
Phu Cuong
RTE 1
Khiem Kuong
HAU NGHIA
GIA DINH
SAIGON-CHOLON
KIEN TUONG
KIEN PHONG
CHAU DOC
AN GIANG
DINH TUONG
Tan An
LONG AN
BIEN HOA
My Tho
GO CONG
Sa Dec
Vinh Long
VINH LONG
Ham Long (Soc Sai)
Truc Giang (Ben Tre)
KIEN HOA
North
RTE
Rach Gia
PHONG DINH
Can Tho
Phu Vinh
VINH BINH
17
Duc Long
KIEN GIANG
CHUONG THIEN
BA XUYEN
BAC LIEU
Vinh Loi (Bac Lieu)
Quan Long (Camau)
AN XUYEN
SOUTH CHINA SEA
MAXIMUM EXTENT OF TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE CAO DAI (April-June 1955)
KIEN GIANG PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS

The Cao Dai

CHAPTER 20. THE CAO DAI

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Cao Dai,* a militant politico-religious sect founded in 1926, expounds a syncretic religious doctrine which venerates Buddha, Confucius, Lao Tze (founder of Taoism), and Christ and is based on spiritualism and faith in one God.

Originally a purely religious organization, in the face of strong Vietnamese nationalism the Cao Dai soon acquired a political orientation and a following of over 2 million. At the beginning of World War II the sect became overtly anti-French, predicting the return of Prince Cuong De† from Japan and the termination of French rule. The French retaliated in 1940 by exiling Pham Cong Tac, the highest Cao Dai official.

The Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao‡ religious sects developed into armed politico-religious groups during the chaos following World War II. The Cao Dai secured vast areas of land and developed quasi-religious fiefs, reminiscent of those of the European Middle Ages, that provided centers of relative calm and stability in the strife-ridden countryside. Although heavily taxed by the Cao Dai leaders under this feudal arrangement, the Vietnamese peasants within these domains were at least assured of physical survival as well as the spiritual guidance of the Cao Dai religious doctrine.

Early in the Indochina War (1946–1954) the Cao Dai were militarily neutral, but when it became obvious that the Viet Minh were attempting to liquidate the religious sects, the Cao Dai began to support the French and signed a military convention of cooperation with the French High Command on January 8, 1947. The Cao Dai were to eliminate the Viet Minh in their zones of influence in exchange for French arms and funds to pay the organized Cao Dai armed forces. Most Cao Dai supported the French, with the exception of a small dissident group under Trinh Minh The, a fanatical nationalist who, in 1951, organized guerrilla activities against the French as well as against the Viet Minh.

---

* Pronounced COW DIE.

Note to the reader: the following discussion of the Cao Dai concerns the activities of the main —Tam Ky—sect; a separate section at the end of this study is devoted to the splinter sects.

† A direct descendant of Gia Long, pretender to the throne of Annam, and capable, according to some, of saving Vietnam.

‡ In this study, the Hoa Hao sect will not be discussed except as it relates to the Cao Dai. A separate study in this series is devoted to the Hoa Hao.

Politically united (at least nominally) with the French, the Cao Dai sought to strengthen their position by making future nationalist regimes dependent on their support. At first advocating an autonomous Cochin China Republic, the Cao Dai finally pledged to support a unified Vietnam and, on May 6, 1950, officially gave their support to Tran Van Huu, the second Premier under Emperor Bao Dai. As a nominal sign of good will, the Cao Dai allowed some of their armed forces to be integrated into the Vietnamese National Army.

The Cao Dai, however, still aspired to become the supreme power in Vietnam. In 1951, they requested the French to arm and train three full Cao Dai divisions (45,000 men); in addition, they demanded three cabinet seats in the Government. With the refusal of both demands, the Cao Dai refused to fight the Viet Minh. Benefiting from this respite, the Viet Minh attacked the Cao Dai stronghold at Tay Ninh, causing the French and Vietnamese Governments to comply, at least in part, with the Cao Dai requests for assistance.

In 1953 the Cao Dai movement followed a strictly nationalist course. On April 9, 1954, the Cao Dai Pope or Ho Phap stated that he was now "supporting without reservations" Bao Dai in the latter's "struggle for total independence for Vietnam" and "for the liberation of the Vietnamese people from the Communist yoke . . ."[1] These promises to support the Saigon regime were tested on April 12, 1954, when the Vietnamese Government decided to integrate the armed forces of the sect into the National Army. The Cao Dai commander in chief attacked the decision, causing the postponement of the decree for more than a year.

Just prior to the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Cao Dai policy changed; anti-Communist pronouncements became fewer and milder. The Cao Dai Ho Phap, attempting to act as conciliator, appealed to both Ho Chi Minh and Bao Dai for moderation. But with the signing of the Geneva Agreement in 1954 and the beginning of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, Cao Dai fortunes began to decline.

The most urgent problem facing Diem was the presence in Vietnam of the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao, and the Binh Xuyen.* Diem was determined either to destroy the sects or to integrate them into the political fabric of Vietnam. Torn by factionalism and internal dissension, the sects were unable to organize in their own defense.

---

* Often included in discussions of the sects, the Binh Xuyen was actually a legalized group of former river pirates with no particular religious orientation. A separate study in this Ethnographic Study Series is devoted to the Binh Xuyen; this group will therefore be discussed here only where it relates to the Cao Dai.

In March 1955, the sects attempted to form a coalition, the United Front of National Forces, to force Diem to step down and to gain for themselves a greater voice in the National Government. The Front soon collapsed, however, when influential members of the sects defected to Diem. Before the sects could reunite, Diem resorted to military measures and ordered the Vietnamese Army to occupy the Cao Dai Holy See at Tay Ninh in January 1956. The Ho Phap fled to Cambodia, where he later died. From January 1956 to November 1963, the Cao Dai were politically and militarily impotent. However, Diem permitted Cao Daism to exist as a religion.

With the overthrow of Diem in November 1963 and the relaxation of his suppressive measures, the Cao Dai emerged once more and requested a voice in the Government. Since the coup, the successive governments of the Republic of Vietnam have generally attempted to conciliate the Cao Dai.

The Cao Dai wield considerable power in the Republic of Vietnam, especially in the Mekong Delta. Estimates of their following range from 1.5 million to well over 2 million.[2] The largest single group is situated in Tay Ninh, the center of the Cao Dai faith. Other influential groups inhabit the provinces of Ba Xuyen, Long An, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Phong Dinh, Vinh Long, Hau Nghia, Bien Hoa, Vinh Binh, and, in lesser numbers, all other delta provinces.

As one author has indicated, the Cao Dai—and the Hoa Hao—are unique among nationalist groups in having roots among the peasantry.[3] Having risen from humble origins by their own efforts, the capable and astute sect leaders understand the peasants of their villages and are thus able to compete with the Communists for control over them.[4] In addition, their former alliance with the Viet Minh gave the Cao Dai an understanding of Communist tactics; they can evaluate Communist actions and act accordingly. It must be added, however, that the sects are important targets for Communist infiltration.[5]

SECTION II

EARLY HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

Cao Daism or, more formally, Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do, the "Third Amnesty of God," is one of the four principal Vietnamese religions, which include Buddhism, Catholicism, and Hoa Hao. According to Cao Dai doctrine, God has already proclaimed two "Amnesties": the first in the West through Moses and Jesus, and the second in the Orient through Buddha and Lao Tze (the founder of Taoism). Whereas these previous Amnesties have assumed human form, the third has been adapted to the higher evolution of the human spirit, revealing itself through spiritualistic seances. Based on spiritualism, Cao Daism is a synthesis of Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and spirit worship. Cao Daism is considered the logical sequel to these religions, which were established in different parts of the world and, owing to lack of communication, failed to converge. The primary aim of Cao Daism is to unite all these religions. The objectives of Cao Daism are best expressed by an authority on the faith:

> Cao Daism is destined to the whole Universe, because the message which it carries already is contained in every religion. The multiplicity of religions is not an obstacle to harmony if there is a subtle but nonetheless real bond which serves as point of contact. This subtle but real bond, Cao Daism, brings . . . to every unprejudiced person, in all sincerity, in all fraternity, in its message: Life, Love, Truth.[1]

The spirit of Cao Dai first revealed itself in 1919 to Ngo Van Chieu, the administrator for the colonial government of Cochin China of Phu Quoc Island, off the coast of Cambodia. A devotee of spiritualism and a Taoist, Chieu organized seances from time to time, with the aid of young mediums, to receive instruction on his spiritual evolution. Chieu made contact with a spirit who identified himself as Cao Dai. While others at the seance were baffled by this spirit, who had never before appeared in any religious texts, Chieu recognized Cao Dai as a surname for the Supreme Being. To worship Cao Dai in a tangible form, Chieu was instructed to represent the spirit symbolically with an eye emitting brilliant rays of light.

Later, when transferred to Saigon, Chieu continued to communicate with Cao Dai in seances held with a group of civil servants.

During a seance on December 25, 1925, Cao Dai reportedly manifested himself to Chieu and his group and announced his intention "to teach the Truth to the people of Viet Nam."[2] At that time, seances were the fashion in Saigon; several groups of civil servants were participating in "tableturning" spiritualistic sessions similar in principle to the use of ouija boards. Eventually these groups also made contact with the spirit, who advised them to use the "beaked basket"* to facilitate their correspondence with the occult world and to consult Chieu for information about the device. In this way, word of Chieu's contact with the Supreme Being spread rapidly, and he came to be regarded as the head of the Cao Dai movement.

During a later seance, the spirit directed a wealthy businessman, Le Van Trung, to join Chieu in leading the Cao Dai movement. A reputed degenerate, spendthrift, and impenitent materialist, Trung resolved from that day on to lead an exemplary life worthy of his new position.[4] Sustained by his new faith, Trung abstained from opium, alcohol, meat, and fish; he became a strict vegetarian and a complete ascetic. This miraculous conversion attracted many adherents. Choosing to remain apart from a movement engaged in widespread proselytism, Chieu relinquished his leadership to Trung in April 1926.[5]

On October 7, 1926, 28 Cao Dai leaders and 247 adherents filed an official resolution requesting Government recognition of Cao Daism as a formal religion.

Although official recognition was not granted immediately, centers to spread the religion were established and cadres of leaders formed.[6] In the following 2 months, the movement attracted over 20,000 adherents. This success was attributed to two factors: first, the spiritualistic nature of the religion held great appeal to the Vietnamese peasants who had a proclivity for the supernatural; and second, the form of the new cult was not contrary to the principal religions already practiced in the country.[7]

A solemn ceremony celebrating the founding of the Cao Dai faith took place November 18–20, 1926, apparently following the granting of official recognition. The celebration at Go Ken (Tay Ninh Province) was attended by thousands of adherents and curiosity seekers. During the ceremony the Cao Dai religious codes were established and promulgated.[8]

In March 1927, the Holy See or Holy Seat of the faith was established in the village of Long Thanh (near the town of Tay Ninh in Tay Ninh Province), and construction of a vast cathedral was begun at the foot of the sacred Ba Den (Black Lady) Mountain.

---

* Known in English as the planchette, or in French as the *corbeille-à-bec*. It is a bamboo basket with a wooden pointer which, under the influence of the spirits, picks out letters to communicate the wishes of the spirits.[3]

Completed May 22, 1937,[9] the structure combines the architecture of a Catholic cathedral and a Buddhist temple. Above the doorway appears statuary showing Lao Tze carrying Jesus Christ on his shoulders; in turn, Christ supports Confucius and Buddha, symbolizing the eclectic nature of the Cao Dai faith. The "saintly" hierarchy or spiritual "fathers" of Cao Daism are depicted inside the cathedral: the three great saints, Confucius, Buddha, and Lao Tze; Christ, ranked below these since he appeared at a later date; [10] the high category of saints, including Quang Am (the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy), the Chinese warrior Quang Cong, and Moses; the general rank of saints, including all those of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism; and finally Sun Yat Sen, Joan of Arc, Victor Hugo, St. Bernard, St. John the Baptist, and the French admiral Duclos.[11]

Four traditionally sacred animals—the dragon, unicorn, tortoise, and phoenix—also appear in the cathedral statuary while numerous pink dragons are entwined around the pillars beneath the "eye of Cao Dai." [12]

This iconographic admixture is ordered architecturally according to particular metaphysical laws. The cathedral is divided into three distinct parts or Dai, symbolizing the notion of the Trinity and representing the Body, the Soul, and the Spirit. The "Dai of the Nine Spires of Evolution," used for public services and ceremonies, corresponds to the nine degrees of the hierarchy, at whose summit reigns the Saint and the Very High Emperor of the Palace of Jade, represented by the Divine Eye. The second Dai, the "Dai of the Divine Alliance, consecrated to the spirit," is the part of the cathedral used by the high priests of the religion for communing with the spirits through the mediums who use the beaked basket.[13] The use of the third Dai, the "Dai of the Eight Cycles of Genesis," was not clear from the information available at this writing.

By 1930 the Tam Ky Pho Do (as the Tay Ninh branch of the Cao Dai sect was officially known) was a strong religious organization patterned after the Roman Catholic hierarchy, including a pope, cardinals, bishops, and monks. In addition, a hierarchy of female ecclesiastical dignitaries emerged.[14]

The feudal nature of the sect was emphasized at this time by the establishment of a temporal administrative division within the religious hierarchy. The central organization of the Cao Dai includes three main administrative branches charged with executing quasi-governmental functions. The first, the Cuu Trung Dai, has executive powers and directs the temporal administration and armed forces of the sect. The Cuu Trung Dai functions with the aid of nine ministries (*vien*): interior (*lai*), rites (*le*), security (*hoa*), finance (*ho*), supply (*luong*), education (*hoc*), agriculture (*nong*), public works (*cong*), and health (*y*). The Giao Tong or Pope controls this organization. Not a living person, the Giao Tong is the sanctified spirit of the Vietnamese philosopher-saint, Ly Thai Bach. Even Le Van Trung (the first great Cao Dai leader) served in the capacity of Quyen Giao Tong or Interim Pope.

The second branch is the Hiep Thien Dai, or Legislative Body, which controls the Cao Dai religious affairs. The highest ranking "living" member of the sect or Ho Phap (Superior)—usually referred to as the living Pope or simply Pope—heads this organization and controls the manipulations of the beaked basket. With two assistants, he presides over a council of 12 members called the Thap-Hni Thoi-quan, which governs a hierarchy of prelates and lower clergy. In the mid-1950's the principal instrument of the Ho Phap's power was a secret society—Pham Mon—of several thousand adherents tied by a fanatical oath of blood. The Pham Mon may still exist, but recent information concerning it was not available at this time. When Pham Cong Tac was the Ho Phap, that office became influential enough to seriously threaten Trung's authority.

The third branch, the Co Quan Phuoc Thien or Charity Corps, is a welfare agency responsible for administering to the poor and invalid among the Cao Dai. This branch was originally established to assure, by eliciting donations, the financial support of the sect. This branch may still function in this capacity.

Beneath these three principal branches are a number of smaller organizational subdivisions, such as the High Assembly, the Grand Council, the Grand Assembly, the Tribunal of Three Religions, and the Tribunal of the Adept. Like that of a modern state, the administrative structure of the sect extends down to the smallest Cao Dai hamlet through provincial units entrusted with both spiritual and temporal powers. The deliberate complexity of the Cao Dai organizational structure is, according to one source, a means of capturing the imagination of the faithful, thus permitting Cao Dai control of much territory.[15]

In November 1934, Le Van Trung died; an election of the Council of the Faithful and of the Sacerdotal Council named his successor, Pham Cong Tac, the highest ranking living member of the Cao Dai.* Complaints of fraud came from 11 rival religious sects who had split off from the Tam Ky sect as a result of internal dissension.† [16] Tac extended the influence of the Tam Ky sect both economically and socially, and steered the Cao Dai away from its primarily religious character into clearly politico-nationalistic channels.[17]

---

* Since the death of Trung, no one has been chosen to fill the position of "Interim Pope." The highest office held by a living person has been that of Ho Phap.

† See "Splinter Sects," p. 851.

Because the French Administration offered no means through which popular discontent could be converted into constructive political activity, nationalist groups critical of French rule began to operate clandestinely for a free Vietnam.[18] By 1934 the Cao Dai had entered into secret relations with the Japanese; they favored the return of Prince Cuong De (a direct descendant of Gia Long, pretender to the throne of Annam) from Japan, and expected Japanese aid for the liberation of Vietnam.[19] Numbering over 300,000 in 1934, the Cao Dai controlled 128 chapels and were particularly strong in My Tho, Cholon, Gia Dinh, and Ben Tre.[20]

SECTION III

STATUS DURING WORLD WAR II

With the beginning of the war in Europe, the Cao Dai stepped up its anti-French propaganda, under the guise of aggressive nationalism. The manipulation of the beaked basket and the diffusion of messages among the faithful were instrumental to this policy. The Armistice of June 1940, marking the fall of France to Germany, provided the Cao Dai with the necessary excuse to strengthen their position; but their activity provoked the French authorities into taking strong measures to prevent the formation of a state within a state.

In August 1940, the French governor of Cochin China sought to close the cathedral at Tay Ninh, most of the chapels throughout the countryside, and all the houses of charity *(phuoc thien)* that had been converted to political organizations. Despite French reprisals, Pham Cong Tac continued to deliver "divine" messages to sustain Cao Dai nationalist agitation. Consequently, on August 21, 1941, Tac and his principal collaborators were exiled to Madagascar, where they were to remain until the end of the war. The deportation of their leader, together with the occupation of Tay Ninh by French troops on September 27, 1941, caused the Cao Dai to seek Japanese support.[1]

In 1943 the directing committee of the Cao Dai, protected by the Kempeitai (Japanese secret police), was reorganized under the auspices of Tran Quang Vinh, who prepared the faithful for direct action against the French. Whereas formerly Cao Dai anti-French activity had been restricted to propaganda activities, Vinh succeeded in forming clandestine paramilitary groups estimated to number 3,000 men. These Cao Dai forces, armed by the Japanese, fought the French throughout World War II and participated in the Japanese take over in Indochina in March 1945.[2] By 1945, the leaders of the Cao Dai were openly supporting the Japanese regime and assisting them in policing the countryside.[3]

On August 14, 1945, after the capitulation of the Japanese, the Cao Dai joined with other nationalist groups (the Vietnamese Independence Party, the Group of Intellectuals, the Civil Servants' Union, the Trotskyite group, the Advance Guard of Youth, and the Hoa Hao) to form the United National Front to take over administrative functions from the Japanese. Plagued with factionalism and irresolution, the Front proved incapable of assuming effective control.

Meanwhile, through the Advance Guard of Youth, infiltrated by Communist elements, the Viet Minh representative Tran Van Giau attempted to seize control of the Front. Failing to achieve this through intimidation, Giau resorted to bluff and persuasion: the Viet Minh launched an intensive propaganda campaign, posing as a strong resistance movement with widespread support. Maintaining this posture, Giau met with the United National Front to urge them to accept Viet Minh leadership in their fight for unity and independence. The Front accepted Giau's offer of leadership; to celebrate the new alliance, it sponsored an independence demonstration in the form of a march in which almost all organized groups in Cochin China participated.* On the same day, the Viet Minh established the Nam Bo, or Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam, which was composed of nine members, six of whom were Communists.[4]

Serious divisions soon developed in the nationalist movement. Internal rivalries, as well as open warfare over the issue of cooperation with the occupying forces, resulted in failure to present a unified front to the British when they reached Saigon in September 1945. Profiting from the split in the ranks of the revolutionaries, the French, with British support, reoccupied Saigon; certain Cochin Chinese provinces, however, were left open to Cao Dai and Hoa Hao seizure.[5]

Meanwhile, the already uneasy alliance between the Cao Dai and Viet Minh was strained to the breaking point. Giau's attempt to seize control of the Cao Dai militia aroused Tran Quang Vinh's suspicions. To safeguard the autonomy of the sect, Vinh, as coordinator of the Cao Dai's activities, refused to turn his forces over to Giau. For this opposition, the Viet Minh detained Vinh and initiated military action against the Cao Dai.[6] In Vinh's absence the sect's militia was organized by Nguyen Van Thanh, Nguyen Thanh Phuong, and Duong Van Dang. Deprived of Vinh's guidance and encouraged by decreasing Viet Minh demands for control over the Cao Dai militia, these three leaders decided to join—on an equal basis—the Viet Minh in their fight against the French. Thus, until June 1946, Cao Dai troops fought with the Viet Minh against the French Expeditionary Corps.[7]

In November 1945, Cao Dai followers in Tay Ninh surrendered to a French armed column which had marched on the city. After his escape from the Viet Minh, Tran Quang Vinh realized the futility of collaboration with the Viet Minh; acting as the commander of the Cao Dai militia, Vinh negotiated a truce with French authorities in June 1946. Phuong brought his Cao Dai militia, about 1,000 strong, to Tay Ninh to be reviewed by Vinh and a representative of the French command. Although Thanh and Dang, the other two military leaders, refused to participate in this ceremony and sought refuge on Ba Den Mountain, the French permitted Pham Cong Tac to return from exile. At a convention in August, Tac made political peace with the French, proclaiming the need for the presence of the French in Indochina and expressing confidence in their ability to reestablish order and public security.[8]

---

* The Trotskyites, distrusting Giau's intentions, were the only group that refused to participate.

SECTION IV

STATUS DURING THE INDOCHINA WAR

Despite their pledge to support the French, the Cao Dai, under the skilled political maneuvering of Tac, remained neutral when fighting broke out between the French and the Viet Minh in early December 1946. But when the Communists attacked Tay Ninh* in January 1947 the Cao Dai sought French protection.

The Ho Phap ratified Tran Quang Vinh's initial accord with the French, in which the sect received authorization to maintain a limited militia force of 1,470 partisans, including 12 voluntary brigades of 60 men each and garrison troops in 16 defense posts throughout Tay Ninh Province.[1] The Holy See soon circumvented these restrictions by creating new formations, such as the "Papal Guard," a "Battalion of Honor," a "Shock Battalion," and numerous unofficial units for the defense of scattered Cao Dai communities.

In return for French military aid, the Cao Dai agreed to cooperate in pacifying the Vietnamese countryside. Most of the Cao Dai troops of the Tam Ky sect honored this pledge, with the exception of Trinh Minh The,† the fanatical nationalist who, in 1951, organized his own guerrilla forces as "loyal opposition" to the Ho Phap. For a year the Cao Dai inflicted heavy losses on the Viet Minh, suffering almost a thousand casualties in the process.[2]

In March 1949, after 2 years of negotiations, the French finally granted Vietnam self-government within the French Union. The Cao Dai pledged allegiance to a unified Vietnam and promised to support Emperor Bao Dai. The integration of a Cao Dai battalion into the Vietnamese National Army symbolized the alleged good will of the sect. Meanwhile, despite an earlier truce, the Cao Dai resumed their private war with the Hoa Hao,‡ considerably weakening the nationalist movement.[3]

Methodically pursuing his aim to assure the Cao Dai a dominant place in all aspects of Vietnamese life, the Ho Phap asked the French to arm and train three full Cao Dai divisions (45,000 men), and to grant the Cao Dai three cabinet seats. Upon refusal of these demands the Cao Dai general Nguyen Van Thanh issued a secret order to cease all offensive action—except legitimate self-defense—against the Viet Minh. Benefiting from Cao Dai passivity, the Viet Minh attacked Tay Ninh, inflicting serious losses. Thanh reversed his policy and ordered retaliatory raids on Communist strongholds. The French and Vietnamese Governments, owing to the worsening situation, were forced to give in, at least in part, to Cao Dai demands: they armed additional Cao Dai troops and granted high cabinet posts to some of the sect's dignitaries.[4]

---

* Realizing the power potential of the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao sects, the Viet Minh sought at this time to eliminate them by force. The Hoa Hao, likewise threatened by the Viet Minh, also reacted by joining the French.

† From his hideout near Tay Ninh, The established a clandestine broadcasting station, "Voice of National Vietnam," which, under the name Quan-Doi Quoc Gia Lien-Minh ("Inter-Allied National Forces") attacked the Bao Dai regime as well as the Viet Minh and the French.

‡ This was essentially a feudal conflict; much of the distrust between the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao stemmed from mutual fears of encroachment upon their quasi-religious feudal fiefs.

This system of alternating support and opposition as a means of extracting favors was indicative of the opportunism characteristic of French-Cao Dai relations. Menaced by nationalism on the one hand and communism on the other, the French tolerated the religious sects not only because they were anti-Communist, and therefore capable of splitting the nationalist movement, but also because they controlled vast territories, which released French troops for combat in areas not under Cao Dai or Hoa Hao hegemony. In the absence of normal governmental authorities, and in exchange for their support of Emperor Bao Dai, the sects were free to carve out larger and larger zones of influence.[5] Together, the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen held sway over most of Cochin China in virtually feudal fashion. The Cao Dai had their own militia—15,000 to 20,000 men—and system of tax collection.[6]

The sects were not totally unsupervised, however. A French staff section, the Inspectorat Général des Forces Supplétives, coordinated the military activities of the sects. French liaison officers and training staffs were garrisoned with all major Cao Dai and Hoa Hao units. Throughout the war, French and Vietnamese officers taught promising Cao Dai cadres the rudiments of modern warfare in a 5-month course offered in the sect's own officers' training school. Yet the actual military value of the Cao Dai in the counterinsurgency effort is debatable. The military units, primarily concerned with enlarging Cao Dai holdings, were considered too valuable to lose in military operations. For this reason the Cao Dai were reluctant to risk an all-out fight with the Viet Minh and seldom deployed their troops except in their own areas.[7]

In 1953 Pham Cong Tac, sensing changes in the political climate of the country, again guided the Cao Dai movement in the direction of Vietnamese nationalism. During August 1953, the Cao Dai leaders seemed prepared to assume the leadership of the country when Premier Nguyen Van Tam's government appeared to be weakening. The "apostolic" representative of the Ho Phap in

France even suggested that ". . . Tay Ninh would offer a solid base for conversations in view of the fact that millions of signatures could back up the signature of the 'Pope' Pham Cong Tac" in final independence agreements between Vietnam and France.[8] In September and October the Ho Phap's political activities further increased, while Bao Dai's efforts to gather a majority of all nationalist groups to negotiate a "final" Vietnamese independence treaty with France continued. In a Saigon press conference, the Ho Phap called for national unity by praising both Bao Dai and Ho Chi Minh and advocating both independence and a close association with France.[9]

At the Nationalist Congress of October 1953, called by Bao Dai to demand full independence, the Cao Dai assumed considerable importance: the Ho Phap, as one of the organizers, read a statement to the press, giving the political aim of the Congress; out of 203 seats allotted for groups at the Congress, members of the Cao Dai held 17, the largest number reserved for any of the sects. When Bao Dai failed to gain full nationalist support in the Congress, he invited individual nationalist leaders to see him; among these were Cao Dai General Phuong and the Ho Phap. On April 9, 1954, the Ho Phap declared that he was giving unquestioned support to Bao Dai in his "struggle for total independence for Viet Nam" and "for the liberation of the Vietnamese people from the Communist yoke. . . ." [10] Three days later the value of these promises was measured when the Saigon Government decided to integrate the armed forces of the sects into the Vietnamese National Army. The commander in chief of the Cao Dai army, Nguyen Thanh Phuong, reacted by circulating a letter to his subordinates denouncing the decision. As a result, the integration decree was not enforced for more than a year.[11]

Because of the deteriorating military situation at Dien Bien Phu, the Ho Phap, sensing a possible Viet Minh victory, once more altered the course of the Cao Dai movement, playing down all anti-Communist propaganda and appealing to both sides for moderation. In an open letter to Ho Chi Minh, the Ho Phap, who had taken upon himself the role of conciliator, stated: "You and His Majesty, Bao Dai, have succeeded in liberating the country. The Vietnamese people are grateful to both of you. However, there remains a problem to be settled: reconciliation between the Nationalists and the Communists." [12] Indeed, the Ho Phap deserved his role as conciliator, for the sects, numbering over 2 million followers (the Cao Dai being the largest), were a force not to be disregarded.[13] Now at their peak of glory, the sects represented the only political groups with substantial followings.

However, with the signing of the Geneva Agreement and the subsequent loss of French financial support, political influence of the Cao Dai began to wane. The appointment of Ngo Dinh Diem as Premier of the Republic of Vietnam heralded the end, at least temporarily, of Cao Dai influence in Vietnamese politics.

SECTION V

STATUS DURING THE DIEM REGIME

Among the serious issues confronting Diem at the outset of his regime was the problem of the sects—the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao, and the Binh Xuyen—who were seeking to preserve their semiautonomous status against the pressures of the Central Government and of each other. Realizing that the authority of the sects would diminish his own, Diem decided to take actions which would either integrate the sects into the Vietnamese political fabric or result in their destruction. Diem's plans consisted of "integrating the self-commanded sectarian armies into the National Army, eliminating the autonomous administrations in the sectarial regions, and rallying the dissident sect leaders." [1]

To implement his plans, Diem needed a strong National Army.* At the time, the commander of the National Army was Chief of Staff Gen. Nguyen Van Hinh, whose loyalty as a nationalist leader was suspect because he was a French citizen. Believing that Hinh was plotting against him, Diem ordered the general's resignation on September 11, 1954, touching off a 7-week army crisis. Hinh refused to step down; instead he took refuge in his headquarters, barricaded with tanks. Diem, fearing a coup d'etat, retreated to his palace, where he was guarded by armed police under Binh Xuyen control. Five days later Binh Xuyen Gen. Le Van Vien transferred his allegiance to Hinh, joining the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, who feared that a "strong unified army linked with Diem would make their position untenable." [2] When nine of his ministers resigned, Diem persuaded four Cao Dai and four Hoa Hao to accept seats in a new cabinet including, among others, Nguyen Thanh Phuong, commander of the Cao Dai armed forces. With this cabinet, Diem hoped to broaden his base of political support and strengthen his hand in dealing with General Hinh. When Hinh still refused to resign, Emperor Bao Dai prompted by Diem, relieved Hinh of his office on November 29, 1954. Diem had succeeded in his first step to win control of the National Army, but the loyalty of the sects was not yet assured. Indeed, more problems concerning the status of the sects were soon to follow.

---

* From its creation in 1948 until the end of the Indochina War, the National Army, whose high officers were mainly French, had been subordinate to the French Union High Command.

Throughout the Indochina War, the French had armed and subsidized the sectarian armies as auxiliary forces against the Viet Minh.[3] By January 1, 1955, the French had withdrawn their support of the sects.[4] The sects were now threatened with the loss of their quasi-feudal autonomy and privileges, and with incorporation of their troops into the National Army. Only one course of action lay open to them—the promotion of a government more sympathetic to their problems.[5]

A complicating factor, however, was the existence of dissidents from the main bodies of the sectarian armies, such as Cao Dai Gen. Trinh Minh The and Col. Ba Cut, the rebel Hoa Hao. Although formally united with the National Army in 1952, The had remained, for all practical purposes, independent. In 1955, following the example of Hoa Hao dissidents, The pledged to cooperate with Diem. On February 13, 1955, newly promoted to the rank of General in the Vietnamese Army, The entered Saigon at the head of his 5,00 black-garbed troops.[6]

Meanwhile the southwestern Vietnamese countryside had drifted into a state of anarchy. The withdrawal of the Viet Minh from such areas as the Plaine des Joncs and the Transbassac had left these territories without any administrative authority or organization. Seeking to expand their domains, Hoa Hao and Cao Dai armed bands fought for control of the land. Intending to return to Saigon as Premier, Bao Dai watched these events from France and feared that sectarian rivalries would prevent the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao from resisting Diem's demands for their surrender.[7] In February 1955, Bao Dai sent his cousin, Prince Vinh Canh, to Saigon to urge the sects to unify.

On Canh's advice, the sects and the Binh Xuyen signed a nonaggression pact and on March 5, 1955, they formed a United Front of National Forces designed to "protect the country and serve the people." As president of this loose coalition, Pham Cong Tac demanded a strong democratic government composed of honest men and extensive power for the sects. The coalition leadership sent emissaries to France to ask Bao Dai to dismiss Diem as Prime Minister and to return to Vietnam himself. Bao Dai, however, reaffirmed his official support of Diem and congratulated the sect on their unification.[8] Before receiving Bao Dai's answer, the sect leaders (the Ho Phap and General Phuong for the Cao Dai, Tran Van Soai and Ba Cut for the Hoa Hao, Le Van Vien for the Binh Xuyen, and Trinh Minh The * on behalf of his dissident Cao Dai) sent an ultimatum to Diem on March 21, 1955, allowing him 5 days to form a government of national union.[9]

---

* The changed his position from cooperation with Diem to support of the Front and (after a sizeable bribe) back to Diem.

Diem refused to yield to the ultimatum, but invited the sect leaders to discuss their grievances with him. When the ultimatum expired, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao cabinet members resigned from Diem's government. A second proposal was made on the 26th of March, this time for the transfer of executive power from Diem to a five-man council, in which Diem was to be merely a member.[10] Despite his rejection of the plan, Diem was saved from immediate hostilities by the factionalism among members of the United Front.[11] Sensing a change in the political atmosphere, the Cao Dai, followed by smaller Hoa Hao sects, retired from the impending conflict on March 29, leaving only the Binh Xuyen and some Hoa Hao to confront the National Army. Fighting between these two groups broke out the night of March 29-30 and resulted in numerous casualties. The following day, Cao Dai Gen. Nguyen Thanh Phuong, with his 20,000 troops, defected to the Prime Minister, after reportedly receiving a bribe from Diem of $3.6 million plus monthly payments for his troops.[12] Significantly, the Cao Dai Ho Phap did not join Phuong in transferring his loyalty to Diem. By April 2, it was evident that the Ho Phap wanted to remain a member of the opposition front; the principal effect of the army transfer was to obligate the Government to pay the troops.[13] The outbreak of fighting between the Binh Xuyen and the National Army prompted Bao Dai, with French approval, to summon the "principal representatives of Vietnamese opinions" to France and to nominate Gen. Nguyen Van Vi as commander in chief of the Vietnamese National Armed Forces, a position hitherto occupied by Diem.

To create the appearance of popular support for himself, Diem arranged a meeting—allegedly to constitute a general assembly of the "democratic revolutionary forces of the nation"—and a Revolutionary Committee was elected. The Committee, which included the expensively bought Phuong and The, persuaded the assembly to repudiate Bao Dai, to dismiss his Government, and to form a national government under Diem, who would then obtain the withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps and organize elections to a national assembly. The Revolutionary Committee, specifically Phuong and The, arrested the generals Nguyven Van Vi and Le Van Ty and forced them publicly to repudiate Bao Dai and to support the committee. Vi later confirmed that this announcement had been made under duress and that he could count on the support of 90 percent of the army. On the same day, Ty defected to Diem.

With Vi's power shattered, the National Army initiated military action against the Binh Xuyen and Hoa Hao. Cao Dai autonomy was suppressed without bloodshed by General Phuong, who, on October 5-6, disarmed 300 troops belonging to the "Papal Guard" and deposed the Ho Phap. The following February (1956), when

Government troops were preparing to occupy the Holy See, Pham Cong Tac* fled to Phnom Penh.[14] Thus, by the end of 1955, Diem had succeeded in breaking the political and military power of the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen. Nevertheless, the religious fervor of the Cao Dai was not dampened, for Diem allowed the faithful to continue practicing Cao Daism.

By 1960, Diem had bolstered Vietnam's economy considerably, but his regime had become increasingly authoritarian and repressive. Until the abortive coup d'etat in November 1960, a number of demands had been made for the liberalization of the regime. Among these was a manifesto in the form of a petition issued by the non-Communist Committee for Liberty and Progress (Khoi Tu-Do Tien-Bo).[15] This bloc, also known as the Caravelle Group, comprised 18 politicians and professional men formerly identified with the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, the Greater Vietnam (Dai-Viet) Party, the Vietnamese People's Party, and dissident Catholic groups.[16] The manifesto signed by Dr. Phan Huy Quat (a Dai-Viet leader), "condemned the undemocratic elections of 1959, the continuing arrests and the suppression of the freedom of the press and of public opinion," and demanded reform of the administration.[17] Diem replied with vague promises of liberalization. In July, the Committee issued two further petitions and vainly demanded official recognition as a political party. With only a few exceptions, the members of the Committee did not participate in the abortive coup of November 1960.[18]

Although an ex-Cao Dai, Gen. Nguyen Thanh Phuong, appeared on Slate 2 as the vice-presidential candidate in the 1961 presidential elections,[19] and press accounts in 1962 occasionally referred to the surrender or capture of Cao Dai members operating with Communist guerrillas.[20] By and large, between 1955 and 1963, Cao Dai political and military activity was reduced to a minimum. However, with the overthrow of Diem in November 1963, and the relaxation of suppressive measures,† the Cao Dai once more began to demand a voice in the Government.

---

* Tac died in Cambodia in 1959.

† Under Diem, on May 24, 1962, a "Law for Protection of Morality" had been passed which outlawed "spiritism and occultism"; this was interpreted as a direct stab at the highly spiritualist and occultist Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects.[21]

SECTION VI

STATUS SINCE THE DIEM REGIME

A press account of January 23, 1964, indicates that the Cao Dai armed forces supported the military junta, led by Maj. Gen. Duong Van Minh, which deposed President Diem. Several senior officers, according to the report, urged their Cao Dai followers to unite in fighting the Communist guerrillas.[1]

When Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh overthrew Minh in a bloodless coup a week later, several members of the Cao Dai sect became ministers in the new cabinet. As Premier, Khanh also released several influential members of the Cao Dai who had been imprisoned during the Diem regime.[2] The new Premier showed a further desire to conciliate the Cao Dai by visiting Tay Ninh, accompanied by Gen. Paul D. Harkins and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, the top United States officials in the Republic of Vietnam. On this occasion, Khanh addressed a crowd of about a thousand, including Cao Dai civil servants and students, and denounced the Communists and colonialists. In addition, Khanh named former Brig. Gen. Le Van Tat of the Cao Dai forces as chief of Tay Ninh Province, gave the Cao Dai church the use of the Long Hao market at a nominal rental fee, and gave Le Van Tat $3,000 as a gift to the people of two districts who had been victims of Communist terrorism. Khanh also granted the Cao Dai followers permanent ownership of all their landholdings.[3]

Premier Phan Huy Quat, who assumed power in February 1965, also favored a policy of conciliation with the sects. Under Quat, a 20-member civilian legislative body, called the National Legislative Council, was appointed and included two Cao Dai members. In addition, a member of the Cao Dai sect was named to Quat's 20-member Cabinet.[4]

On March 17, dissident members of the Cao Dai called a press conference to promote the establishment of an organization for peaceful co-existence with the Communists, and the organization of a United Nations police force to control the Communist guerrillas in the country. Saigon police, posing as cameramen to gain entrance to the press conference, broke up the meeting.[5] The following day the Minister of State announced in the Vietnamese press that the aforementioned group had not been acting on behalf of the Cao Dai sect and that their opinion did not reflect its true views. Within a few months, however, the Cao Dai (and Hoa Hao) were charging Quat with persecution and neutralist proclivities.

Since the overthrow of Diem, the Cao Dai have once more emerged as a political force, but the sect still appears to be debilitated by factionalism and lack of unity of purpose.

SECTION VII

CAO DAISM AS A RELIGION*

Origins of Cao Dai Doctrine

Cao Dai is the symbolic name for the Supreme Being who has revealed himself in the Orient for the third time. According to Cao Dai precepts, God has adapted his teaching to the refined nature of the human spirit by choosing mediums as vehicles of expression, rather than by granting to any mortal the privilege of founding Cao Daism. God has chosen this form of communication because all religions submitted to the authority of a human founder have not been universal; the prophets always show themselves intolerant of the truths already proclaimed by other religions.

According to Cao Dai, all parts of the world have been explored: humanity now aspires to be a real peace; but due to the multiplicity of religions, men do not always live in harmony with one another. For this reason, the Supreme Being chose to unite all religions in one.

In a spiritual message of January 13, 1927, Ly Thai Bach, one of God's ministers and an early Cao Dai leader, issued the following message:

> ....Unite, love one another, mutually help each other; it is divine law. In this moment when everyone is condemned to purgatory, if one thinks only of one's personal interests, if one seeks to sow misery and suffering everywhere, one risks being enticed into this infernal torrent. . . .

Fundamental Principles of Cao Daism

Cao Dai doctrine seeks to reconcile all religious convictions as well as to adapt to all degrees of spiritual evolution:

1. Morally, Cao Dai doctrine reminds man of his duties toward himself, his family, society, humanity, and the universal family.
2. Philosophically, it preaches contempt of honors, riches, and luxury, or the release from servitude to materialism in the quest for tranquility of spirit.
3. Culturally, it advocates adoration of God and veneration of the higher spirits who constitute the august hierarchy of the occult. Although the Vietnamese national cult of the ances-

---

* All the material in this section is directly translated from Gabriel Gobron, *Histoire et philosophie du Caodaisme* (Paris: Dervy, 1949), pp. 38–47.

tors is permitted, carnal offerings as well as use of votive papers are condemned.

4. Spiritually, it confirms the existence of a soul whose successive reincarnations, as well as the posthumous consequences of its human actions, are regulated by the Law of Karma.

There are three types of Cao Dai adherents and three types of rules governing their behavior:

1. The religious practitioners, the high dignitaries, are compelled to lead a life of privation, if not of asceticism: sexual relations are prohibited; alcohol, meat, and fish are taboo, a strict vegetarianism being recommended. These believers have the authority to communicate with God and the higher spirits, but must do so only on exceptional occasions.
2. Mediums, auxiliaries to the dignitaries, are not monks or nuns themselves, but are obliged to observe certain material privations. They are forbidden to practice spiritism except in the presence of dignitaries, after the latter have recited certain prayers.
3. Of the ordinary followers, the mass of believers, little is required except that they follow the duties and moral teachings laid down by the Cao Dai executive body and that they prostrate themselves regularly every day before the Cao Dai altar, whether in a temple or at home. On the altar must be a drawing of an eye encircled by clouds, ritual candlesticks, and offerings of fruit, flowers, tea, and incense.

The Cult of Cao Daism

The Cao Dai cult demands only that its followers address daily prayers to the Supreme Being at 6 a.m., noon, 6 p.m., and midnight. Neither confessions nor communications is required—spiritual evocations, being of a delicate and dangerous nature, are reserved for the priestly hierarchy. Cao Dai rituals commence with the offering of incense *(niem huong)*; then follow the prayers *(khai kinh)*, the canticle to the glory of God (recited in unison), and three more canticles in honor of the three saints—Confucius, Lao Tze, and Buddha. From time to time, the priests exhort the faithful to practice a virtuous existence, as conceived by Confucius, and to venerate the spirits who have benefited mankind at various times—Christ, Buddha, Confucius, and ancient Chinese deities. On holidays, including Christmas and the traditional Buddhist fetes, more elaborate ceremonies take place.

Cao Daism preaches universal love, which is manifested in human fraternity, kindness to animals (our less evolved brothers), kindness toward plants (which provide us with shade and medicines), and service to one's brother. The Cao Daist must be ready to assist, through words and action, anyone in need of help; by helping others, he will assure his own salvation, and by leading an exemplary life, he will win souls to the glory of God.

Cao Daism provides Five Interdicts to be observed by its followers:

1. Do not kill living beings—because of the life, the center of consciousness, which resides within them.
2. Do not be covetous—in order to avoid falling into materialism through the need for possessions and domination.
3. Do not eat meat or drink alcohol.
4. Do not be tempted by the sensual.
5. Do not lie—verbal sins are as punishable as accomplished crimes.

SECTION VIII

SPLINTER SECTS*

The period of Cao Dai expansion was also a period of dissension. Differences arose over questions of power and the Ho Phap's right to form an army. As individual leaders acquired a following, they began to split off from the main Tam Ky Pho Do sect located in Tay Ninh; 11 splinter sects emerged, of which 8 survived.

Chieu Minh Danh

The first Cao Dai leader to form a new sect was the founder of Cao Daism, Ngo Van Chieu, who established the Chieu Minh Danh sect at Can Tho in 1928. In mid–1965, this group was led by Vo Van Ngan.

Minh Chon Ly

The Minh Chon Ly sect was founded in 1931, when a member of the Tam Ky hierarchy, Nguyen Hao Ca, was directed by the spirits to leave Tay Ninh and to organize his own sect at Rach Gia. Upon reaching Rach Gia, Ca received another spiritual message directing him to My Tho, where he established the Holy See for his sect. Between 1932 and 1938, the sect expanded rapidly, differing in doctrine from the other Cao Dai sects. At first the Minh Chon Ly pantheon of deities included Tam Tran, the Three Deities, Quang Cong, and Ly Thai Bach or the Supreme Spirit; however, it was eventually enlarged to include Thich Ca (a reincarnation of Buddha), Christ, Lao Tze, Confucius, and Ngoc Hoang Thuong De (the Emperor of Jade). Dissatisfied with the original symbol of Cao Dai—the eye emitting nine rays of light—Ca adopted a new symbol, the "Eye in the Heart," an eye set in a red heart from which rays of light emanate. According to Ca, the eye merely records, but the heart has full realization or true knowledge.

The Minh Chon Ly sect has its own taboos; for example, they do not tolerate the Thien cult, the cult of Ong Tao, or beliefs in the *ma*, *qui*, and *than* spirits. Of all the traditional Vietnamese cults, only the cult of the ancestors is permitted. Minh Chon Ly members do not assist at the rituals held at their village *dinh* (Vietnamese communal temple of the guardian spirit). Unlike the other Cao Dai sects, the Minh Chon Ly are allowed to eat food derived from living creatures.

---

* Information in this section is derived from Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Village in Vietnam* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 66–73, 290–94.

The Minh Chon Ly hierarchy comprises two main branches: the Committee of Three Great Heads—the ruling body—headed by the founder in the position of Central Head (Thai Dan Su); and the Committee of Nine, including a secretariat (Tu Buu or Four Treasures) and the Five Elements (Ngu Hanh) in charge of the five administrative regions in Vietnam. A female hierarchy is primarily responsible for proselytizing among women and attending to their religious instruction. Members of the female hierarchy, like the male priests, live at the Holy See, but worship at special altars.

Minh Chon Ly members perform four daily rituals in their homes, at 5:30 and 11:30 a.m., 5:30 p.m., and midnight. Three daily prayer periods—9:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. are also required. Adherents do not make daily offerings of food on their altars, in the belief that the Supreme Being does not demand it.

Bach Y Lien Doan and Minh Chon Dao

Two small, little known sects appeared during the early 1930's. The Bach Y Lien Doan established its Holy See in Tay Ninh Province some time in the early 1930's—the exact date is uncertain. In 1931, the Minh Chon Dao was founded, and the Holy See established in Bac Lieu.

Chon Ly Tam Nguyen

Nguyen Van Kien and a group of followers broke away from the Minh Chon Ly in 1933 and organized the Chon Ly Tam Nguyen sect, the smallest of the Cao Dai sects, in Tan An. The members of this sect consider their group to be the most profoundly religious and the purest of the Cao Dai sects. No symbol adorns their temple, since each participant has the Supreme Spirit within himself; in addition, they ignore the traditional Cao Dai food taboos and reject all Vietnamese cults.

Tien Thien

Organized in 1931 by Nguyen Huu Chin and 12 followers, the Tien Thien sect has a doctrine and structure resembling those of the Tam Ky and Ban Chin Dao sects. By 1939, the Tien Thien sect claimed it had 72 temples,* but it still needed a Holy See. In 1940 the French outlawed all splinter sects, reducing them to clandestine activity. In 1954, Nguyen Buu Tai reorganized the sect hierarchy, establishing a Holy See at Soc Sai, 18 kilometers from Ben Tre. The Tien Thien sect is now strongest in Kien Hoa Province.

Each member of the Tien Thien sect must make a retreat of 100 days; messages directing a member to make the retreat at a certain time must be obeyed, all other responsibilities being secondary. In small villages, those on retreat go to the temple; the men reside on one side the women—responsible for preparing the meals—on the other. Four times a day, 4 a.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and midnight, 90-minute periods of meditation take place; meditation is considered most meaningful when the participant manages to achieve a state of complete trance. Yoga exercises are practiced daily, and public confession is held each morning at 7 o'clock. Seances are held intermittently, with only one scheduled on the 15th day of the second lunar month. The members use a stylized version of the beaked basket at this time; the true basket is reserved for the Tam Ky sect.

---

* One temple is known to exist in Ap Dinh.

Ban Chin Dao or Chin Dao Ban

The Ban Chin Dao sect was organized in 1934 by Nguyen Ngoc Tuong, who, after replacing Le Van Trung as Ho Phap of the Cao Dai for a few years, left Tay Ninh to settle in Ben Tre. Based on the same doctrine and organization as that of the Tam Ky sect, the Ban Chin Dao had acquired sufficient following by 1940 to warrant establishing a Holy See.

Ban Chin Dao rituals, in general, resemble the Vietnamese rituals observed in the rural villages.

Summary

In general, Cao Daists consider themselves simply as Cao Daists rather than as members of any particular sect. Members may attend services at other temples in other villages without conflict, with the exception of the Minh Chon Ly, whose doctrine represents a radical departure from the movement. These splinter sects, in general, maintain close contact with the Tam Ky sect; a member of the Tam Ky sect is, in fact, responsible for disseminating news to the other groups.

The splinter sects, on the whole, maintain cordial relations. The Ban Chin Dao and Tien Thien are on particularly good terms. Since their doctrines are almost identical, the members of each sect are permitted to openly attend rituals at the temple of the other. On the other hand, several incidents have occurred between leaders of the Minh Chon Ly and the Tien Thien, indicating the uneasy relationship between these two sects.

The French authorities favored the Tam Ky sect, but persecuted several of the splinter sects for their association with nationalist movements. Since 1954 the splinter sects, forced to operate clandestinely during the French regime, have begun to reappear and reconstruct their temples, many of which had been demolished by the French. In 1955 after they allied themselves with the Hoa Hao and Binh Xuyen, the influence of the Tam Ky sect began to decline. Information on the current status of the splinter sects is unavailable in the open literature at this writing.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Bernard B. Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," *Pacific Affairs*, XXVIII, 3 (September 1955), p. 242.
2. Roger Levy gives the figure of 1,500,000 for the Cai Dai membership in his book, *Viet-Nam, Cambodge, Laos: 1954–1957* (Paris: Centre d'Études de Politique Etrangère Comité d'Études des Problèmes du Pacifique, 1957), p. 5; George L. Harris, *et al.*, use the two million estimate in *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962).
3. Ellen Joy Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina Continues: Geneva to Bandung* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 24.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Roy Jumper, "Sects and Communism in South Vietnam," *Orbis*, III, 1 (Spring 1959), p. 90.

II. EARLY HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

1. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 237.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Col. Frank O. Blake, Interview, September 1965. [Former Foreign Broadcast Information Service Chief, Saigon.]
4. Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Village in Vietnam* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 290–91.
5. Gabriel Gobron, *Histoire et philosophie du Caodaisme* (Paris: Dervy, 1949), p. 22.
6. Hickey, *op. cit.*, pp. 290–91.
7. Gobron, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
8. Gobron, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–27.
9. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
10. Norman Lewis, *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), p. 41.
11. Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
12. Maj. A. M. Savani, *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam* (Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre Mer, 1953), pp. 89–90.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
15. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
16. Fall, *op. cit.*, pp. 238–39; Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
17. Ellen Joy Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 51; Le Thanh Khoi, *Le Vietnam: Histoire et civilisation* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955), p. 449.
18. Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina, op. cit.*, p. 79.

19. Joseph Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), p. 437.
20. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

III. STATUS DURING WORLD WAR II

1. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
2. Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina, op. cit.*, p. 107.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 52; Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
4. Donald Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indochina* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 118.
5. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950), p. 31.
6. Savani, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–91; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina, op. cit.*, pp. 109–10.
7. Savani, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–92.
8. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 240; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 182; Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

IV. STATUS DURING THE INDOCHINA WAR

1. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 82; Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
2. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
3. Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina, op. cit.*, p. 211; Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
4. Fall, *op. cit.*, pp. 240–241; Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
5. Robert G. Scigliano, *South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), p. 19; Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina, op. cit.*, p. 273.
6. Hammer, *Struggle for Indochina, op. cit.*, p. 285.
7. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 241–42.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
13. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

V. STATUS DURING THE DIEM REGIME

1. Brian Crozier, "The Diem Regime in Southern Vietnam," *Far Eastern Survey*, XXIV, 4 (April 1955), p. 49.
2. Jumper, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
3. Crozier, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.
4. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 251; Jumper, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
5. "Diem Tackles the Sects," *The Economist*, CLXXV, 5824 (April 9, 1955), p. 131.
6. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 380–81; Crozier, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
7. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 383–84; Crozier, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
9. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 251; Crozier, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
10. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 385; Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
11. "Diem Tackles the Sects," *op. cit.*, p. 130.
12. Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), pp. 245–46.
13. Robert Alden, "Sect Head Bars Vietnam Fealty," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1955, p. 2, col. 5.

14. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 390–97.
15. Joseph J. Zasloff, "Rural Resettlement in South Viet-Nam: The Agroville Program," *Pacific Affairs*, XXV, 4 (Winter 1962–1963), p. 337.
16. Robert G. Scigliano, "Political Parties in South Vietnam Under the Republic," *Pacific Affairs*, XXXIII, 4 (December 1960), pp. 340–341; "A New Look at Vietnam," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XXV, 2 (January 11, 1962), p. 49.
17. Wesley R. Fishel, "Problems of Democratic Growth in Free Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence*, edited by Wesley R. Fishel (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 28; "A New Look at Vietnam," *op. cit.*, p. 49.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams, op. cit.*, p. 276.
20. Harris, *et al., op. cit.*, p. 326.
21. Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams, op. cit.*, pp. 266–67.

VI. STATUS SINCE THE DIEM REGIME

1. Reuters Press Release, *The New York Times*, January 23, 1964, p. 12, col. 5.
2. P. H. M. Jones, "Khanh in Command," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XLIV, 5 (April 30, 1964), pp. 239–40.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 241; "Khanh Seeks to Rally Sect," *The New York Times*, February 26, 1964, p. 3, col. 3.
4. Jack Langguth, "Saigon Installs Cabinet Designed To End Disunity," *The New York Times*, February 17, 1965, p. 1, col. 8.
5. Jack Langguth, "Saigon Breaks Up Meeting on Peace," *The New York Times*, March 18, 1965, p. 5, col. 3.

VII. CAO DAISM AS A RELIGION

Footnote in text.

VIII. SPLINTER SECTS

Footnote in text.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alden, Robert. "Sect Head Bars Vietnam Fealty," *The New York Times,* April 2, 1955, p. 2, col. 5.

Blake, Col. Frank O. Interview. September 1965. [Former Foreign Broadcast Information Service Chief, Saigon.]

Burchett, Wilfred G. *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1963.

Buttinger, Joseph. "Are We Saving South Viet-Nam?," *The New Leader,* XXXVIII, Supplement, 26 (June 27, 1955), 1–15.

———. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Carver, George A., Jr. "The Real Revolution in South Viet-Nam," *Foreign Affairs,* XLIII, 3 (April 1965), 387–408.

Crozier, Brian. "The Diem Regime in Southern Vietnam," *Far Eastern Survey,* XXIV, 4 (April 1955), 49–56.

"Diem Tackles the Sects," *The Economist,* CLXXV, 5824 (April 9, 1955), 130–31.

Donnell, John C. "National Renovation Campaigns in Vietnam," *Pacific Affairs,* XXXIII, 1 (March 1959), 73–88.

Fall, Bernard B. "Indochina Since Geneva," *Pacific Affairs,* XXVIII; 1 (March 1955), 3–25.

———. "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," *Pacific Affairs,* XXVIII, 3 (September 1955), 235–53.

———. *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963.

Fishel, Wesley R. "Problems of Democratic Growth in Free Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* Edited by Wesley R. Fishel. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, pp. 9–28.

———(ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* New York. Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Gobron, Gabriel. *Histoire et philosophie du Caodaisme.* Paris: Dervy, 1949.

Hammer, Ellen Joy. *The Struggle for Indochina.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954.

———. *The Struggle for Indochina Continues: Geneva to Bandung.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955.

Harris, George L., *et al.* *U.S. Army Area Handboook for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Hickey, Gerald Cannon. *Village in Vietnam.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964.

Janse, Olov Robert Thure. *The Peoples of French Indochina.* Smithsonian Institution War Backgroud Series, No. 19. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1944.

Jones, P. H. M. "Khanh in Command," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* XLIV, 5 (April 30, 1964), 239–41.

Jumper, Roy. "Sects and Communism in South Vietnam," *Orbis,* III, 1 (Spring 1959), 88–93.

"Khanh Seeks to Rally Sect," *The New York Times,* February 26, 1964, p. 3, col. 3.

King, Seth. "Vietcong Blocked by Sect in Delta," *The New York Times,* April 2, 1965, p. 7, col. 1.

Lancaster, Donald. *The Emancipation of French Indochina.* London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Langguth, Jack. "Saigon Breaks Up Meeting on Peace," *The New York Times,* March 18, 1965, p. 5, col. 3.

———. "Saigon Catholics Fearful of Buddhist Army Purge," *The New York Times,* April 13, 1965, p. 1, col. 6.

———. "Saigon Installs Cabinet Designed to End Disunity," *The New York Times,* February 17, 1965, p. 1, col. 8.

Lasker, Bruno. *Peoples of Southeast Asia.* Prepared under the auspices of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945.

Le Thanh Khoi. *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et civilisation.* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955.

Levy, Roger. *Viet-Nam, Cambodge, Laos: 1954–1957.* Paris: Centre d'Études de Politique Etrangère Comité d'Études des Problèmes du Pacifique, 1957.

Lewis, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

Mus, Paul. *Viet-Nam: Sociologie d'une guerre.* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952.

"A New Look at Vietnam," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* XXXV, 2 (January 11, 1962), 47–51.

Reuters Press Release, *The New York Times.* January 23, 1964, p. 12, col. 5.

Savani, Maj. A. M. *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam.* Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre Mer, 1953.

Schmid, Peter. "Free Indo-China Fights Against Time: Vietnam's Winding, Rocky Road," *Commentary,* XVIV, 1 (January 1955), 18–29.

Scigliano, Robert G. "Political Parties in South Vietnam Under the Republic," *Pacific Affairs,* XXXIII, 4 (December 1960), 327–46.

———. *South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.

Tas, Sal. "Behind the Fighting in South Vietnam," *The New Leader,* XXXVIII (May 9, 1955), 11–12.

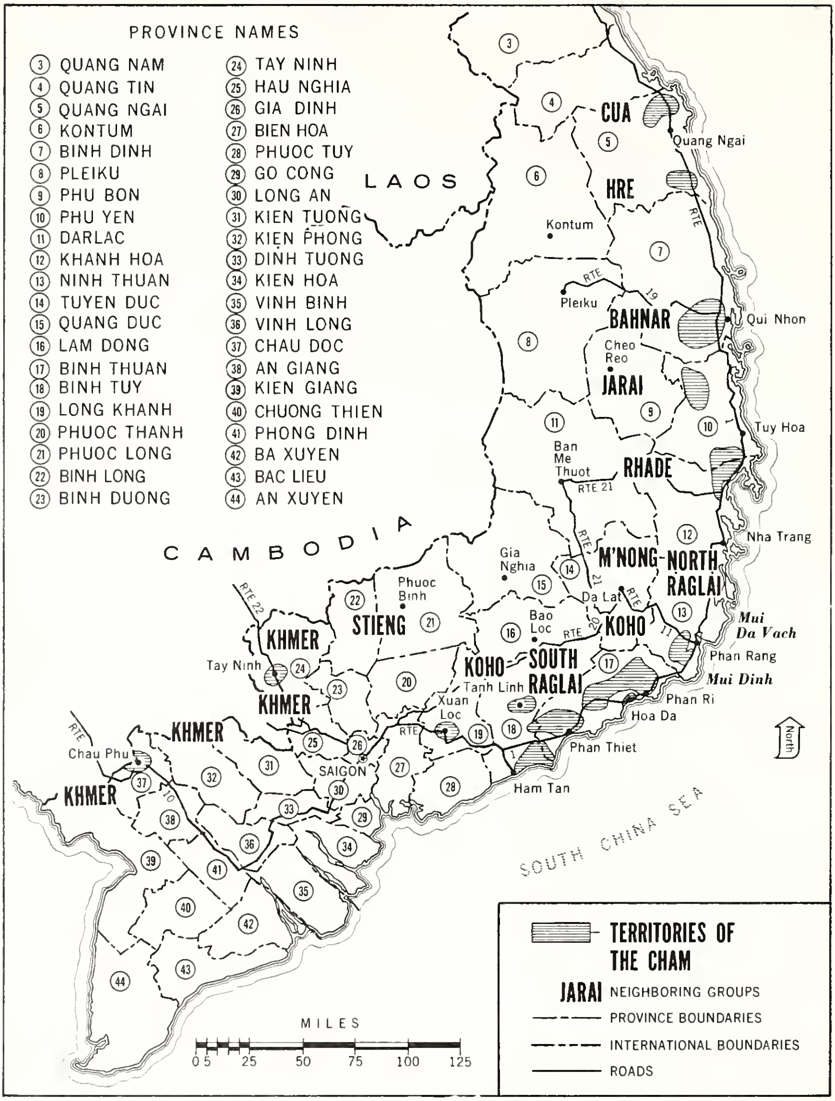
Thompson, Virginia. *French Indo-China.* New York: Macmillan, 1937.

Thompson, Virginia, and Adloff, Richard. *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia.* New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950.

Warner, Denis. *The Last Confucian: Vietnam, Southeast Asia and the West.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964.

———. "Vietnam's Militant Buddhists," *The Reporter,* XXX, 10 (December 3, 1964), 29–31.

Zasloff, Joseph J. "Rural Resettlement in South Viet-Nam: The Agroville Program," *Pacific Affairs,* XXV, 4 (Winter 1962–1963), 327–40.


PROVINCE NAMES
③ QUANG NAM
④ QUANG TIN
⑤ QUANG NGAI
⑥ KONTUM
⑦ BINH DINH
⑧ PLEIKU
⑨ PHU BON
⑩ PHU YEN
⑪ DARLAC
⑫ KHANH HOA
⑬ NINH THUAN
⑭ TUYEN DUC
⑮ QUANG DUC
⑯ LAM DONG
⑰ BINH THUAN
⑱ BINH TUY
⑲ LONG KHANH
⑳ PHUOC THANH
㉑ PHUOC LONG
㉒ BINH LONG
㉓ BINH DUONG
㉔ TAY NINH
㉕ HAU NGHIA
㉖ GIA DINH
㉗ BIEN HOA
㉘ PHUOC TUY
㉙ GO CONG
㉚ LONG AN
㉛ KIEN TUONG
㉜ KIEN PHONG
㉝ DINH TUONG
㉞ KIEN HOA
㉟ VINH BINH
㊱ VINH LONG
㊲ CHAU DOC
㊳ AN GIANG
㊴ KIEN GIANG
㊵ CHUONG THIEN
㊶ PHONG DINH
㊷ BA XUYEN
㊸ BAC LIEU
㊹ AN XUYEN
LAOS
CAMBODIA
CUA
Quang Ngai
HRE
RTE
Kontum
RTE
19
Pleiku
BAHNAR
Qui Nhon
Cheo Reo
JARAI
Tuy Hoa
Ban Me Thuot
RTE 21
RHADE
Nha Trang
RTE 21
M'NONG
NORTH RAGLAI
Gia Nghia
Da Lat
RTE
Phuoc Binh
STIENG
Bao Loc
RTE 20
KOHO
11
Mui Da Vach
Phan Rang
RTE 22
KHMER
Tay Ninh
KHMER
KOHO
SOUTH RAGLAI
Tanh Linh
Mui Dinh
Xuan Loc
Phan Ri
Hoa Da
RTE
KHMER
RTE
Chau Phu
SAIGON
RTE
1
Phan Thiet
Ham Tan
North
KHMER
10
SOUTH CHINA SEA
MILES
0 5 25 50 75 100 125
TERRITORIES OF THE CHAM
JARAI NEIGHBORING GROUPS
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
ROADS

The Cham

CHAPTER 21. THE CHAM

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Among the minorities of the Republic of Vietnam, one of the smallest and least known is the Cham group. A people of Malayo-Polynesian stock, the Cham developed under both Hindu and Moslem influence in their early history. The imprint of these two civilizations, although altered by local tradition and superstition, is still evident in the customs, mores, and religious practices of the Cham. Cham adherents of Brahmanism and of Islam call themselves Cham Kaphir and Cham Bani respectively.

For centuries a race of warriors and pirates, the Cham defended their vast and prosperous Kingdom of Champa from numerous invasions. However, in 1471, the empire finally collapsed before Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese) invaders.[1] Only the grandiose temples and sanctuaries, irrigation systems, sculpture, woven cloth, and jewelry remain as evidence of this once great civilization. The descendants of the once powerful Cham, numbering between 16,000 and 45,000, are scattered along the eastern coast of the Republic of Vietnam and near the Cambodian border. These people now eke out a living as artisans, farmers, and fishermen.

The Cham live in small village settlements, grouped according to matrilineal kinship ties. Their language belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian family and is related to the Rhade, Jarai, and Raglai tongues. The Cham are extremely religious and perform daily rituals to appease animistic spirits.

Name of Group

In Sanskrit, Champa is the name of a bush and of a flower. The descendants of the peoples of the Kingdom of Champa are still known as the Cham, though the Vietnamese refer to this group as the Nguoi Champa.[2] The Cham have also been called, together with the Montagnard tribes, the "People of Thuan Thanh," a name derived from the second character of Binh Thuan and the second character of Chien Thanh (the capital of the Kingdom of Champa).[3] The French and Americans refer to these people as Cham, Tchame, and Tiame. Other spellings of the name are: Kiam, Thiame, Tjame, and Tsiam.[4] In the mountainous areas of Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, and Binh Thuan, the Cham are also referred to as the Ha.

Some uncertainty surrounds the present-day clan system of the Cham. One source claims that the Cham are divided into several clans: the Ca-Giong, the Da-Vach, and the true (orthodox) Cham. The Ca-Giong Cham are said to inhabit the northern part of Quang Ngai Province and the area of Dakley in Kontum. The Da-Vach Cham occupy a region farther south near Ba To, Minh Long, and the southern part of the district of Son Ha. The orthodox Cham live in the region between the Da-Vach and the Ca-Giong.

Size of Group

Estimates of the number of Cham in the Republic of Vietnam range from 16,000 to 130,000.[5] Recent calculations vary between 16,000 and 45,000.[6] In the districts of Phan Rang (Ninh Thuan Province) and Phan Ri (Binh Thuan Province), the Cham population is estimated at 20,000,[7] and in the districts of Xuan Loc (Long Khanh Province) and Tanh Linh (Binh Tuy Province), 3,000.[8] The Cham are believed to be slowly increasing in number, but under the influence of the Montagnards and the Vietnamese, they are gradually losing their distinct cultural identity.[9] Many have been assimilated into the general Vietnamese culture and do not represent a true ethnic minority.

Location

Cham villages are scattered throughout two principal areas in the Republic of Vietnam: along the Cambodian border in Tay Ninh and Chau Doc Provinces and in the central lowlands along the eastern slope of the Annamite mountain chain in the provinces extending from Quang Ngai to Binh Tuy. The greatest number seem to be situated around Phan Thiet and Phan Ri in Binh Thuan Province and near Phan Rang in Ninh Thuan Province.

The Cham live in proximity to a number of ethnic groups in addition to the Vietnamese.[10] In Quang Ngai Province, the Cham have the Hre tribe to the west, the Cua to the northwest, and the M'nong to the southwest. The Cham in Binh Dinh Province live primarily in the south, adjacent to the Bahnar in the west and the Hroi in the south. In Khanh Hoa Province, the Cham have settled along the northeast border near the Rhade to the west and northwest and the Hroi to the north.[11] In Phu Yen Province, the Cham inhabit the southern districts of Son Hoa and Dong Xuan with the Jarai to the southwest and the Rhade to the west.[12] The Cham in Ninh Thuan reside in the eastern portion of the province, near Phan Rang, and have the Churu and Raglai as neighbors to the northwest. In Binh Thuan Province, the Cham are located near Phan Ri, Hoa Da, and

Phan Thiet with the Koho to the south and the west, the Churu to the northwest, and the Raglai to the north and northwest. The Cham in Long Khanh live in the south central area of the province around Xuan Loc, with the Koho to the north. In Binh Tuy Province the Cham inhabit the region around the town of Tanh Linh and along the coast above Ham Tan in proximity to the Koho and the Chrau in the west.[13] The Cham in Tay Ninh and Chau Doc Provinces are located near the provincial capitals and are surrounded by Malays and Khmers.[14] See the map for a clear picture of location and proximity to other groups.

Terrain Analysis

The territory of the Cham can most conveniently be discussed by covering the two major areas—the central coastal area and the delta area—of Cham habitation separately. The Cham inhabit a strip along the coast of the Republic of Vietnam from Quang Ngai Province in the north to Binh Tuy Province in the south. They are also found in the delta provinces of Chau Doc and Tay Ninh on the Cambodian border.

The coastal regions of Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, and Phu Yen are characterized by low sand dunes, alluvial deposits, and lagoons. In general, the relief does not exceed 600 feet, but in some areas the coast almost disappears, where mountain spurs reach shoreward and separate the lowlands. The fertile lowland plains produce two crops of rice annually (in April and September). Several fast-moving rivers—the Thu Bon, the Kim Son, and the Ba—drain eastward into the South China Sea.

The provinces of Khanh Hoa and Ninh Thuan are characterized by the most jagged and irregular section of the Vietnamese coastline. High wooded mountains rise precipitously from narrow, marshy, and relatively infertile plains lying at the heads of deep-water inlets enclosed by peninsulas bounded by cliffs. The Song Cai River, which enters the Bay of Nha Trang at the town of Nha Trang carves a broad valley inland through mountains exceeding 1,800 feet in height. A few miles south of Nha Trang the rugged terrain gives way to low-lying sand dunes surrounding the Lagoon of Thui Trieu. This lagoon, with the marshlands behind it, empties into the Bay of Cam Ranh. The narrow coastal plain of this region is drained by several small streams and is overgrown in some places by mangroves. The coast becomes irregular again just south of Mui Da Vach with mountains rising steeply inland to a height of over 2,500 feet. The Song Kinh Dinh River enters the Bay of Phan Rang 2 miles below the port of Phan Rang on the coastal plain.

From Phan Rang south, the coast follows a northeast-southwest course. Between Phan Rang and Phan Thiet, both the summer and winter monsoons blow parallel to the shore, causing this region to receive the lowest rainfall in the entire country. Cliffs rise abruptly from the sea at Mui Dihn limiting the coastal plains to a narrow strip of sand and mud fringing the Bay of Mui Dinh. The Bay of Phan Ri is bounded by a forest on the east and a barren region to the west. The latter is formed by an isolated upland zone separated from the Annamite Mountains by the Song Luy valley bordering the coast. Three inlets backed by woods divide the Bay of Phan Ri from the Bay of Phan Thiet. The wooded coastal plain, extending inland for some distance, is marked by thousands of acres of sand dunes which reach a height of 26 to 50 feet. The mountains rise behind the dunes about 20 miles to the west. The sterility of the soil, the irregularity of the rainfall, and the damage from tropical storms limit the rice yields in this area, which is the least populated part of the lowland coastal region.

The Cham in the Long Khanh and Binh Tuy Provinces occupy the lowland plantation, or the southern plantation area in the vicinity of Saigon. The soil of this region is composed of ancient alluvial, or gray, lands and in some regions red basaltic lands. Despite heavy rainfall, the area is well drained.

The delta area inhabited by the Cham—Chau Doc and Tay Ninh Provinces—is to the west of Saigon along the Cambodian border. Extensive drainage projects have converted the marshy ground into intensively cultivated land. During the dry season early maturing or floating varieties of rice are grown. The eastern portions of the area are marked by small farms, whereas the outlying newly drained lands are characterized by larger farms. Several rivers dissect the delta regions settled by the Cham, principally the Hau Giang (Bassac) River, which flows through Chau Doc and the Vam Co Dong River, which traverses Tay Ninh. Canals provide irrigation and transportation for small craft.

The coastal regions inhabited by the Cham are well served by transport facilities. The Trans-Vietnam Railroad follows the coast from the inner side of the sand dunes in Quang Ngai Province down to the Song Luy valley, where it turns inland and continues to Saigon. Branch railway lines connect the cities of Qui Nhon and Phan Thiet to the Trans-Vietnam Railroad. National Route 1 roughly follows the path of the railroad along the coast. Route 1 connects, with secondary links in some cases, Route 14 at Quang Ngai and Tuy Hoa; Route 19, at Binh Dinh; Route 21 at Ninh Hoa; and Route 11 at Phan Rang. Several secondary roads lead inland from Phan Ri, Phan Thiet, and Ham Tan.

There are all-weather airfields at Quang Ngai, Qui Nhon, Song Cau, Tuy Hoa, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh, Ninh Thuan, Long Xuyen, Bien Hoi, and Phan Thiet. Seasonal fields are located at Duc My, Ninh Hoa, Trai Ca, Phan Rang, Ca Na, Song Mao, Phan Ri, and Song Luy.

The Chau Doc and Tay Ninh regions are linked with Saigon by Routes 20 and 22 respectively.

SECTION II

BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

The precise origin of the Cham is unknown, but the similarity of customs and linguistic affinities indicates that they emigrated from the Malayan Archipelago sometime during the Stone Age. By the time Hindu traders reached the Indochinese Peninsula (Annam) in the beginning of the Christian era, many of the Cham had intermarried with various tribal groups of Indonesian origin already inhabiting the area.[1]

Language

Cham belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian language family.[2] Cham is described as having a Malay base but is distinguished from Malay by numerous grammatical differences.[3] Polysyllabic and nontonal, the vocabulary is limited to words for everyday use.

To the unaccustomed ear, Cham sounds very coarse and disagreeable, as no slurring occurs—the harsh sounds succeed each other as though ripped from the throat. The multitude of aspirations and guttural syllables render it difficult for the occidental to learn.[4]

Several of the Montagnard tribes are linguistically related to the Cham. The dialects of the Rhade and of the Jarai have been strongly influenced by Cham, but whether they are fundamentally of the same stock is not clear. The Raglai and the Churu, on the other hand, speak a language almost identical with Cham.[5]

Many of the Cham Bani, or Moslem Cham, centered in Tay Ninh and Chau Doc speak Khmer, Vietnamese, and Malayan, in addition to Cham.[6] Most of the Cham Kaphir, or Brahman Cham, speak only their own tongue.[7] A few Cham are able to read the written Vietnamese *quoc ngu*, or romanized Vietnamese.[8] Written Cham, somewhat similar to Sanskrit, has been preserved to a small extent. The Cham cannot read the ancient language; other than sorcerers, few can read modern Cham documents.[9] Cham is written from left to right, and the alphabet differs according to region and the influence of the dominant population. In Cambodia and probably Tay Ninh and Chau Doc, the alphabet comprises 4 vowels, 2 diphthongs and 29 consonants. In the rest of the Republic of

Vietnam, the Cham alphabet has five short vowels, five long vowels, and four diphthongs. In addition to the letters, certain signs are used in conjunction with the vowels to influence their pronunciation. Cham numerals appear to be scarcely altered letters of the alphabet with the exception of 4, which seems to be a vocalic sign, and 0, the Indian o.

Cham is extremely difficult to read as the letters follow uninterruptedly without separation of words. Capital letters are also absent, as are syllabic divisions within words. The similarity of form between different letters and the overlapping of sentences render reading even more laborious.[10]

Legendary History

The Cham story of the past is confined to the legends of the fabulous adventures ascribed to their kings. Many of these monarchs have been deified over the ages.*

Factual History

The existence of the Cham enclave, known by the Chinese as Lin Yi or "savage forest," was first recorded in the latter part of the second century A.D.† The Chinese annals date the founding of the Cham kingdom in 192 A.D. In the third century the Cham moved north from Binh Thuan Province, pillaging and seizing territory from the Han dynasty.[11] They also drove some of the tribal peoples, known now as the Montagnards, into the hills from the coastal areas. In the 12th century, the Cham established hegemony over most of the Darlac Plateau.[12] During this period of hegemony, the Cham organized the Jarai, Rhade, and Churu tribes, established administrative divisions where total anarchy had previously prevailed, and taught the tribesmen agricultural techniques.[13] The Cham recruited the Montagnard tribesmen as auxiliaries for their armies and collected taxes from them.

From the outset of their expansion, the Hindu Cham clashed with the Chinese and the sinicized Annamese (ethnic Vietnamese).[14] Protracted border wars between the Chinese and the Cham continued for several centuries, interrupted periodically by Chinese-Annamese disputes.

During Chinese-Annamese conflicts, the Cham sided first with one, then the other, finally helping the Annamese free themselves of Chinese rule in the 10th century. Once liberated, the Annamese devoted their attention to fighting the Cham. They clashed so relentlessly that only extermination of one group or the other could solve the conflict. Further weakened by a series of wars with the Chinese and Khmer, the Cham finally succumbed to the Annamese in 1471. The conquerers seized the most fertile coastal lands for their settlements, and the Cham survivors of the massacre in 1471 fled into the woods and hill country[15] or were absorbed by the Annamese army and settled in military colonies.[16]

---

* See the discussion of deities under "Principal Brahman Deities" for the legends associated with these kings, p. 896.

† The kingdom obviously existed long before the Chinese knew of it, but any Cham documents relating to the ancient empire have long since vanished.

In its grandest period, the Champa Kingdom extended from Saigon to Canton and perhaps west to Siam. It was divided into a number of provinces corresponding to the natural configurations of the coastal plains. Pushed southward by the Chinese, the Kingdom maintained itself between 10-20 degrees latitude and 103-107 degrees longitude.

After evacuating Hue, the first Cham capital, and Tra Kieu, the second capital, during the Chinese advance, Cham power apparently stabilized around the fortress of Cha Bon, the last stronghold of the Cham kings.[17]

Their geographic location has greatly influenced Cham development since the downfall of their Kingdom of Champa. Driven back from the sea and the fertile areas of the coastal plains, the Cham have changed from a prosperous seafaring power to a small agrarian culture.* Principalities related to ancient clan names formed small political units bounded by the mountain spurs that divide the Cham territories.†[18] Internal rivalries prevented reunification of the Cham which in turn made impossible a united defense against common enemies.

Equally significant are the social relationships that evolve between the Cham and other ethnic and tribal groups. The proximity of the Cham and the Vietnamese has resulted in some exchange of customs, though the extent of the interchange is unclear. Many authorities contend that the Cham remain socially distant from the Vietnamese.[19] Other authorities believe that since the Cham-Annamese wars there has been considerable contact between the two groups including some intermarriage and that Vietnamese influence is strong among the Cham.[20]

The Cham along the Cambodian border live in villages adjacent to the Khmer people. Though the culture of the Khmer is basically Buddhist, they have been influenced by Hindu culture. The Khmer consider the Moslem Cham mercenary, false, and violent, but very brave. The Cham and Khmer seldom intermarry.[21]

The Cham Bani live in harmony with the Malays along the Cambodian border. Often sharing villages, these peoples are racially allied, and both are Moslem. In fact, Malay influence is responsible for restoring and strengthening the Moslem practices of these Cham.[22]

---

* See "Economic Organization," p. 907.

† See discussion of "Clan and Class Structure," p. 877.

Relations between the Cham and the Montagnard tribes were warlike until the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, when the Cham fled to the mountains to seek refuge among the tribal peoples. It is believed that many Montagnards are descendants of these Cham, who intermarried with the tribespeople. Harmonious relations apparently now exist between the Cham and neighboring Montagnard tribes, with the single exception of relations with the Bahnar.[23] Commercial exchanges and almost daily contacts between the groups result in the exchange of tools, utensils, customs, superstitions, and religious beliefs. Some Montagnards even attend Cham religious ceremonies.

The Cham consider the tribesmen as their inferiors, but amicable relations exist nonetheless, for the Montagnards realize they are indebted to the Cham.[24] According to one source the Cham, despite their own fall from power, maintain supremacy over the tribesmen. The Montagnards accept this arrangement in good faith as logical and natural.[25] If the Cham still have such a strong influence upon the tribal peoples, they may be of strategic importance in winning the support of these groups.

Significant Historical Events [26]

192 A.D.	Probable founding of Champa Kingdom.
220-230	First mention of Champa (Lin-Yi) in Chinese annals.
3d Century	Vietnamese reach Col des Nuages.
248	Cham push northward to Gate of Annam and site of Hue.
4th-5th Century	Series of wars result in Chinese conquest of coastal areas and Tonkin Delta, and eviction of Cham.
8th Century	Period of invasions and pillages by pirates, armies from Java. Center of Champa moved to Panduranga (Phan Rang) and Kauthara (Nha Trang).
10th Century	Cham abandon region of Hue.
982	Vietnamese independence from China.
1040-1044	Vietnamese invasions—land and sea—of Champa.
1150	Beginning of Cham hegemony over plateau of Darlac.
1190	Cambodian invasions of Champa.
1217-1218	Cambodians and Cham unite against Vietnamese.
1220	Withdrawal of Cambodians from Champa.
1242	New Vietnamese invasions.
1282	Mongol occupation of Champa.

1312	Champa becomes feudal state of Vietnam until 1326.
1371	Cham invasions of Red River valley and pillage of Hanoi.
1350-1400	Frequent clashes between Cham and Vietnamese.
1471	Vietnamese capture of Vijaya, last Champa stronghold. Massacres—30,000 Cham taken into captivity. Withdrawal of Cham kings to the southern area of Cap Varella.
1509	Massacre of hundreds of Cham by Li-Oai-Muc.
1579-1735	Residence of Cham princes at Panduranga (Phan Rang).
1650	Seizure of Prince Po Rome: Vietnamese conquest of Phu Yen and Nha Trang.
1698	Dong Nai region falls under Vietnamese domination.
1735-1822	Conversion of titled princes to simple mandarins.
	Vietnamese invasion of Binh Thuan, seizure of coastal Cham territory, Mekong Delta, fisheries, fertile land.
1757	Vietnamese seizure and domination of Chau Doc.
1822	Cham administrative authority limited to chiefs of villages and cantons.

The history of the Cham as a distinct culture ends early in the 19th century. For the past century and a half, the Cham have been trying to retain their own language, customs, and mores in the face of almost continual adversity. In recent years they have been opting between extinction and assimilation by the ethnic Vietnamese.

Settlement Pattern

There are several types of settlements in the various Cham territories. The Cham along the Cambodian border live clustered in groups on the banks of rivers or canals, often separated by Vietnamese and Khmer villages.[27] In this region, they occasionally build whole villages on huge anchored rafts.[28] Other settlements comprise low thatched huts scattered about a compound bounded by a palisade. These huts are situated atop sand dunes or cleared areas, for trees and shrubs are believed to exert a harmful or poisonous influence.[29]

The characteristics of the Cham dwelling, whether on pilings or flat on the ground, depend on the regional climate and terrain. Where flooding is a regular occurrence in the rainy season and invasion of termites, scorpions, ants, and snakes are frequent in the dry season, the house on pilings offers obvious advantages. The Cham in the upper regions of Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh Provinces live in such above-the-ground dwellings, whereas those of Phan Rang, Nha Trang, and Phan Thiet Provinces dwell in houses on the ground.

The traditional Cham house, called the *thang yo,* closely resembles the Rhade house and measures about 20 feet in length, 10 feet in width, and 6½ feet in height (at the center or highest point).[30] Placed on large rocks, flat on the ground or on pilings, the house is constructed with straw-covered mud walls and comprises three rooms and a common corridor. One compartment serves as the parents' and boys' room and at times as the funeral chamber for the family dead. The center room is occupied by the girls and future brides. Clothes belonging to the ancestors are placed in a basket and hung from the ceiling in this room. The third cubicle serves as the granary. Rich men's houses are composed of three groups of buildings: the thang yo, the *thang mu-yau* (secondary house) attached to the first, parallel and in front of it, and the *thang gar,* to the left and perpendicular to the two preceding houses.

In the more well-to-do houses,[31] ceilings are made of plaited fibers lined with a layer of mud to conceal the framework. There is no space between the mud walls. The roofing consists of parallel wooden laths running from the peak to the base of the roof. These are tied together by stems of split bamboo to fix the thatching in place. The floor is made of crushed bamboo. No decoration adorns the house.

A lean-to houses the family's tools, and behind the house is the well. A buffalo stable, or corral, made of pickets sunk into the ground and tied together by interlacing branches, is near the house.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

Cham skin coloring varies from a dark brown to a light reddish-brown. In children, the skin appears covered with a light down and seems copper colored in the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet.[1]

The head, smaller than that of the Vietnamese, is well proportioned. Full in children, the profile becomes bony as the Cham mature.[2] Their eyes, usually brown, are large, and the eyelids lack all trace of the Mongolian fold. The eyebrows are thick and slightly arched.

The Cham have fine, brittle hair that varies in color from auburn to black; partial or even complete albinism is not uncommon.[3] The hair ranges from straight to wavy, but is never curly. Beards and mustaches are more common among the Cham than among the Vietnamese. Cambodian Cham men, and perhaps those in Tay Ninh and Chau Doc Provinces, generally shave and cut their hair. Cham wowen wear long hair, unlike the Khmer, who wear brush cuts. The Vietnamese Cham, other than those in Chau Doc and Tay Ninh, keep their mustaches and scraggly beards; both sexes wear their hair twisted into a chignon at the back of their heads. Cham women do not consider their hair as an ornament worthy of care. Even during religious ceremonies, when they are adorned in their richest garments and jewels, their hair is in complete disarray.

The hands of the Cham are wider than those of the Vietnamese, and Cham feet broaden about the toes.[4] The women are generally well proportioned with full breasts and buttocks. Many Cham women have a pronounced saddleback.

Health

Conditions of sanitation and personal hygiene among the Cham are poor.[5] Except for the prevalence of malaria and cholera (the principal diseases affecting the people), Cham adults are relatively healthy. They suffer from few of the diseases, such as dysentery, anemia, and gangrene,[6] which prostrate outsiders in their area.

Illness is treated by Cham herbalists familiar with medicinal properties of certain native vegetable and animal products. Remedies used to cure diseases and minor ailments include camphor, used as an anesthetic; wax-covered pills containing a mixture of sandalwood; and the bark of mangostan and eaglewood for antidotes to cholera. Human bile, once rubbed on the skin to make a warrior and his elephant invincible, has been replaced by goat bile used as an emetic. The same results are obtained by putting a rag soaked in evil-smelling substances into the patient's mouth.[7]

A European who personally doctored the Cham early in this century stated that the Cham were good patients; they took all medicines without complaint.[8]

Suicide seldom occurs among the Cham, as they exhibit few desires which are not easily satisfied. The few Cham who do commit suicide do so by drinking opium mixed with vinegar.[9]

Manual Dexterity

The manual dexterity of the Cham is relatively good, as is apparent in their cartmaking, weaving, and building construction.* The houses are ingeniously built with great attention to detail; the roofing, for example, is made of round wooden laths carefully matched and meticulously set in place. The thatching consists of individual fibers folded around a bamboo lath and solidly hemmed, making the roof completely watertight.[10] The Cham also make all their crude but sturdy tools, domestic utensils, and musical instruments.

Psychological Characteristics

Although descendants of a warlike people, the Cham today are individually extremely timid. As a group, however, the Cham exhibit great courage. In 1950, in the face of Viet Minh aggression, the Cham united solidly to fight the Communists.[11]

The villages of these pacific and mild-tempered people are described as the embodiment of peace itself, with few brawls or quarrels.[12] The Cham have likable dispositions, but lack energy and initiative.[13] When unwilling to build their own houses, they hire Vietnamese to construct them.[14] Rivalry is not an important factor among the Cham; they make little effort to compete with the Vietnamese to improve their living standards.[15]

The Cham have an easygoing philosophy, seldom worrying about economic problems, and often abandoning themselves to almost total unconstraint. If an object appeals to them, they pay any price for it, frequently borrowing and then repaying the debt at great personal expense.[16]

State and court laws go unheeded, as the Cham obey only those laws conforming to the mores and customs of their own people.[17]

Extreme honesty in word and deed characterizes Cham dealings with one another: swindling, stealing, and lying are unknown among them. Precious paddy reserves suspended in baskets from trees to avoid danger of fire, insect, or rodent remain unmolested; great respect is given all objects belonging to another Cham.[18] Verbal agreements in social and business dealings are likewise respected. The Cham place great importance on oaths, especially when taken next to a wharf; they believe that to break one's word incurs punishment by the gods.[19]

---

* See "Special Arts," p. 908.

The Cham tend to be spiteful when they feel they have been unfairly treated. If they appear not to show their hatred, they are only waiting a chance for revenge. Family feuds will, therefore, drag on for generations. If the father does not succeed in avenging himself in his lifetime, his son replaces him in the task until a definite settlement is reached. Nevertheless, they are just as disposed to forget all if a sworn enemy will come asking forgiveness.[20]

Conservative, superstitious, and obstinate, the Cham resist progress; every action must be sanctioned by ancestral practice. Imitation is restricted to what happens to please them and does not conflict with superstitions or religious beliefs. These prejudices explain why, despite centuries of contact with civilizing tendencies, the Cham have remained basically unchanged. Contact with city dwellers has effected only minor changes in the Cham way of life, but even these have not been uniform; some, for example, have learned to eat with utensils, but the majority still use their fingers and drink water directly from streams.[21] This resistance to change, together with their sedentary nature and fond attachment to their environment, also keep the Cham from seeking more fertile land at a distance, even though the resources of their own area may have been depleted.

Respect is based on prestige in the Cham society. Village chiefs, elderly men (regardless of social position), religious leaders, and sorcerers are held in the highest esteem.[22]

General Attitude Toward Outsiders

The arrival of an outsider causes the women to run and hide, but the men receive him politely. They will offer him a room or bring him flowers and fruit, but their inestimable pride prevents them from performing any act which might place them in a servile position. In the past their relationships with outsiders having administrative authority were often hyprocritical and insincere. Since their history abounds with incidents of foreign exploitation, persecution, and oppression, the Cham were suspicious of strangers, especially when their women were concerned. Cham women, with their reputation for chastity, were closely guarded; if an outsider attempted any intimacies, he risked death, even if the woman had invited his advances.[23]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

General Social Organization

Cham society is matriarchal, the women playing a more important role than the men. Vested with domestic authority, the women choose their husbands, initiate marriage proceedings, distribute property to their daughters (and sometimes sons), determine the religion of their children, and name their daughters. The men, who occupy a distinctly inferior position, name sons and take care of village duties.[1] The women do the housework, care for the children, cook, weave, winnow and pound the grain, husk the paddy, carry the heavy burdens, and, at the end of the day, fetch the water for the entire village.[2] As priestesses and female deities, they play an important role in religious ceremonies.

Clan and Class Structure

The clan system of the Cham predated the arrival of Hindu influence. Kin groupings were distinguished by clan names and individual totems or symbols. According to legend, two clans struggled for supremacy: the coconut-tree clan, which ruled the state of Panduranga (Phan Rang), and the areca-nut clan, north of Panduranga. These clans were purportedly matrilineal except in the case of the royal family, where according to Hindu tradition, succession was reckoned by the male line.[3]

The current clan structure of the Cham is unclear. One authority claims there are three clans: the Ca-Giong, the Da-Vach, and the orthodox Cham. Although differences in dialect have been reported, the mores and customs of all these Cham are practically identical.[4]

No information relating to the present class structure of the Cham is available. In the imperial phase of Cham history, society was divided into four castes: Brahmans, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. A noblewoman could marry a man of low caste provided his name was the same as hers.[5] It is not known if this system still prevails.

Marriage

Cham marriage customs and mores are complex, often differing according to religion (Brahman or Moslem) or region. A girl is permitted considerable freedom of choice in marriage, for in a mixed marriage the religion of the children is determined by the mother.[6] At marriageable age, a girl is free to choose a husband.[7] The girl's parents do this by calling on the boy's family and bringing two cakes and some betel. If the boy tastes these, he accepts betrothal, and the couple are engaged.[8]

Among the Cham Kaphir (Brahman), marriage takes place without civil or religious ritual. When the date of the marriage is set, the boy simply goes to live with the girl's family. A simple feast is given by both families, and the boy presents the girl with a gold or silver ring as a symbol of the marriage.[9]

More complicated customs are observed by the Cham Bani (Moslem): the marriage must be consummated several months before the ceremony takes place. The children of these unions are frequently old enough to participate in the official celebration of the nuptials.[10] On the appointed evening, the couple, dressed in white unhemmed garments, walk hand in hand along mats extending from their dwelling to the ceremonial hut. (It is important that the couple's feet should not touch the ground.) The priests, surrounded by the families, recite prayers. The girl's parents tell the young man that they give him their daughter; offering his hand, the young man says he accepts. Kneeling before the priests, the young man prostrates himself three times. The young girl also prostrates herself three times and then returns home alone. The priests ask the young man what gifts he brings to his future spouse. He must give a silver ring and may give additional gifts, such as bracelets, buffaloes, and carts. The priests bless the ring which two witnesses then take to the young girl. If the girl accepts the ring, it is placed on her finger and the young man is told of his good fortune. The bride's parents give the groom a gift, as do the groom's parents. The guests offer the couple gifts, and a great feast terminates the ceremony.[11]

Polygamy, although acceptable among the Cham Bani, is rare, as the expense is prohibitive. The wealthier Cham Bani permit themselves this luxury, but only with the permission of the first wife, who is responsible for requesting a second wife.[12] When polyandry exists, the husbands take turns cohabiting with the wife who has chosen them.[13]

Adultery is rare among the Cham. According to tradition adultery is punishable by death; in practice, the penalty is less severe. Although both the man and woman are physically punished, only the woman must pay a fine for the crime. The guilty woman must pay a fine of two pigs, one for her husband and one for the village. For adultery committed with a relative, the fine is increased to two buffaloes, one for the village and one for a ceremony, and a pig for the husband. The guilty woman must then kill a white hen next to a stream and swear that she will not again commit adultery. In addition, public punishment is administered by villagers who first beat the guilty persons with canes, then force them to eat like pigs from a trough. Then the punished ones leave by way of the forest and return to normal life.[14]

Divorce

Divorce among the Cham is frequent and easily accomplished. Women generally initiate divorce proceedings, as it is their right to discard their husbands at will. Divorced women keep the house and two-thirds of the property.[15] When a couple are no longer compatible and mutually agree on divorce, they meet with the spiritual head of the village who publicly questions them on their reasons for divorce. The interrogation is concluded with the order that the couple return their wedding gifts to each other. Then, in the presence of the two families concerned, the couple take an oath to separate. At this point, objects exchanged before the marriage are returned to their rightful owners. The termination of the ceremony is marked by the traditional feast.

Birth

Childbirth, called the "accouchement by the fire" by the Cham, involves few preparations. In each village, the midwife assists the mother and lights the traditional bedside fire, which must burn until the 7th day, when the woman is allowed to leave her bed. A candle must also burn continuously to ward off evil spirits. On the 7th day, the midwife extinguishes the fire and plants an iron stake amid the ashes; she then carries the cinders to the nearest crossroads, deposits them with a prayer, and places a betel leaf on the heap. According to Cham superstition, evil spirits, tormented souls, and ghosts frequent crossroads and must be appeased through offerings at particular times. A feast is then offered to the gods and the midwife receives several small gifts.[16]

Naming the Child

The Cham wait until a child is 6 months old before naming him. Then they give the child an ugly or unpleasant name, hoping to make the child unattractive to the evil spirits. A sickly child may be given the name of a disease in order to keep away the spirit responsible for that particular disease. These names apply until the age of 12 when the evil spirits lose their influence.

Child-Rearing Practices

The Cham adore their children and spare no pains to keep them amused and happy. To please the benevolent spirits, the mother smears the child's face with a yellow substance of flour and saffron to simulate the skin coloring traditionally associated with these deities. After a bad dream, the mother tries to conceal her child from the evil spirits by covering him with soot. The Cham exhibit their affection for one another with a snort behind the ear on the back of the neck. The children are particularly fond of this and burst into shouts of laughter whenever their mothers do this.[17]

Education

The average Cham receives little formal education. Generally the priests are in charge of instruction; they teach the children the alphabet (each letter representing a divinity which inhabits the body) and the basic principles of reading. Most well-to-do Cham attend Vietnamese schools and receive a more extensive education.[18] However, many Cham do not make apt pupils.[19]

The Moslem Cham center their lives around the mosques and the Koranic schools, where many children attend elementary school and then continue to secondary school. A few may study in Kelantan in Malaya or in Mecca. Instruction is confined to religious subjects, and the Koran is read in Arabic, supplemented with Malayan commentaries.[20]

Vocational techniques, such as those used in fishing, farming, and cartmaking are undoubtedly passed on from generation to generation. Nonvocational education related to other activities, such as music and chess, is similarly derived.

Puberty Rites

Among the Cham Bani (Moslem), the passage of a girl from infancy to puberty (the marriageable age) is marked by a 2-day ceremony called the Karoh (closure or closing) and is under the supervision of the High Priest or Ong Gru. This symbolic ceremony is usually performed when a girl is 15 and has completed her development. The timing is based on the belief that the moon, a feminine deity, reaches perfection on the 15th day. A girl is not free to marry until this ceremony has been completed.

Two huts are constructed for the Karoh ceremony: one serves as a dormitory for the girls whose initiation is to be recognized; the other hut houses the spectators. At daybreak, the girls, adorned in their finest robes and crowned with a mitre, proceed as a group to the High Priest. He places a grain of salt on the lips of each girl, offers a cup of pure water, and, if she is chaste, cuts a piece of hair from her forehead. If she has been violated, the High Priest takes the lock from the back of her neck. To symbolize withdrawal from the world, the girls return to their hut while the priests participate in a feast. About midday the girls reappear wearing their hair in a chignon to indicate the attainment of marriageable age. The ceremony concludes with gifts for the girls and a feast for all the participants.[21]

The counterpart of this ceremony among Cham Bani boys is called the "Entry to Religion" and occurs during the boy's 15th year. The purely symbolical act consists of simulated circumcision in which the priest pretends to perform the act with a wooden knife. Then the boy is given a religious surname (Ali, Ibrahim, etc.) which he may use in addition to his secular name.[22]

Reaching the marriageable age, however, does not justify sexual promiscuity. Premarital sexual relations are strictly prohibited. The Cham keep close watch over their women, for, as their saying goes, "You might as well leave an elephant among the sugarcane, as leave a man alone with a girl."

Death and Burial

Cham beliefs concerning life after death are difficult to establish and are far from uniform. Their ceremonies would suggest the Cham believe the souls of the deceased join the ranks of the divine. Early reports claimed that some Cham believed that the souls enter certain animals, such as serpents and crocodiles. Many Cham believed the soul inhabits rodents, while others claimed rodents are the haven only for the souls of the stillborn and very young children. In any case, sacrifices were made to various animals reputedly harboring souls of the dead.[23]

The Cham Bani (Moslem) have traditionally buried their dead with relatively little pomp. In the center of the family compound, a small hut was erected to accommodate the hammock in which the washed body, wrapped in a white cotton cloth, was placed. The priests recited prayers while friends and relatives paid their respects by offering gifts.

It was considered an honor to keep the cadaver in the hut for a period of several weeks. Then a nocturnal procession of priests, family, friends, and villagers escorted the body to the grave site, where it was placed in a temporary grave, head turned toward the north. All participants promised to visit him regularly. They prayed that the deceased would not return to haunt them or to complain about his ungrateful relatives. If the deceased was very old, several boards were placed over the body, but to cover a young person's body with boards would have caused the family to suffer. The grave was half filled with soil. Then only the priests remained to recite more prayers and fill the grave.[24]

The Cham Bani mourned the deceased in seven services, called Padhi, which occurred on the 3rd, 7th, 10th, 30th, 40th, and 50th days after the burial and concluded with the anniversary date. During these services the family had a meal beside the grave, and the grave was sprinkled with holy water. Priests came to pray at the head and feet of the dead at the fifth Padhi; after the ceremony they were given betel, tobacco, cloth, and crockery.

At the final Padhi, the Cham Bani of Binh Thuan often disinterred the bones and transferred them to a sacred place. The Large Dune or Gohoul-Prong, located between the valley of Parik (Phan Ri) and the edge of the sea, served as the final resting place for the bones of Parik Moslems. The people of Phan Rang buried their dead at the foot of a hill called Tchoek-Tadou or Kadou. The exhumation was accompanied by the same rites as those for the original burial. The bones were placed in a small coffin together with gold or silver rings belonging to the deceased. The disinterment usually occurred during the rainy season, but some variations in the timing have occurred.[25]

Among the Cham Bani of Quang Ngai, according to an early source, all lamenting ceased abruptly after the initial interment.[26]

Traditionally, Cham Kaphir (Brahman) funeral observances rested on the notion that the soul must receive a new body after losing its earthly home. The formation of this new body, actually a spirit or soul, was believed to have been accomplished by a ceremony using rice. Rice alone was believed capable of effecting the transformation to a new body or soul. In anticipation of the funeral observance, the family preserved its best stalks of rice from the harvest for this ceremony.

To destroy the flesh and physical and moral corruption, the Cham Kaphir have traditionally cremated all their dead except the very poor and young children. When a family was too poor to afford the expensive ceremonial rites, the deceased was buried without priests, his head turned southward.[27] Children who had not been initiated into the full rights of adulthood were also buried in the ground and their souls were believed to have entered the bodies of palm rats.[28] This practice stemmed from the belief that young children were still innocent and did not need the purification of fire. Memory of a child was perpetuated in ceremonies conducted by the head of the family, who made offerings of food, such as rice, coconuts, and bananas; waved his arms to imitate the movements of a bird; and placed a red flower in a bronze vase.[29]

The body of the deceased was wrapped in a shroud of 8 or 10 white cotton garments, one over the other. The head was not included in the shroud; it was covered with a thin veil. The cadaver was placed in a special hut erected in the family compound. There, on a bed oriented towards the south and raised on a dais, the cadaver rested with candles placed at the head and feet. Suspended above the bed was a gold cloth canopy from which hung paper birds and animals; the birds were believed to have escorted the soul of the deceased to its future dwelling place.[30] The priests placed clumps of mountain hemp around the dais. In addition, rice, cakes, water, and betel surrounded the bed, and martial trophies and flags decorated the hut.

During the period between death and cremation, which varied from a few weeks to a month or more, the body remained in the hut attended at all times by priests and priestesses who recited prayers. Visitors, housed and fed at the family's expense, came to entertain the deceased with their witty conversation. An orchestra of flutes, violins, drums, and cymbals played continually day and night. Day and night, the priestesses prepared meals to offer to the cadaver; each time the veil was removed and afterwards replaced. Children and grandchildren of the deceased abstained from eating meat during this period. Adults and friends did not participate in any festivities unless these were associated with the deceased. In the presence of the deceased, however, they sang, danced, and consumed great quantities of food and drink.

Finally, when the body reached an advanced state of decomposition, plans were made for the cremation. On the appointed day, the priests constructed a catafalque and adorned it with gilt paper animals and flowers.[31] The body, resting on the catafalque, was carried by the priests to the fields near the exit of the village. The funeral procession included the orchestra, a group of villagers dressed in white, and mourning women in long hoods. As the body was carried from the village, the priests turned the catafalque round and round to confuse the soul of the departed and to prevent it from returning home. To this same end, the villagers ran back and forth in all directions while continuing to advance slowly towards the site of the cremation.[32] Meanwhile, a priest (Po Damoeum or "Lord of Sorrow" for the occasion) shut himself in the house of the deceased to implore every object, animate and inanimate, to prevent the soul from reentering the house to torment the living.[33]

At the spot chosen for the cremation, the priest examined the site and with a pickax marked out the four corners of the place destined for the funeral pyre. The assistants removed the sod and prepared the pyre, while the priests unrolled the shroud from the corpse and offered it a last meal—a few grains of rice placed under the tongue. The body was re-covered and placed on the pyre. The priests and relatives made three solemn turns around it; when the fire was lit, they deposited their candles on the pyre. Personal effects of the deceased were then thrown on the fire, and mourners sent gifts to their own dead relatives by placing the names of the deceased in baskets attached to the catafalque. During the cremation, the priests and people offered prayers interspersed with laughter and anecdotes.[34] Serious mourning, weeping, and tearing of hair were performed by hired mourners.[35]

As soon as the flames reached the body, the priest detached the head from the torso, smashed the frontal bone with an ax, and removed nine little pieces, the noble bones, which he placed in a little hole in the ground filled with water. Then he threw the head back into the fire. The ceremony of the purification of the bones followed: The bones were removed from the hole and ceremoniously deposited in a small copper box called a *klong;* and the priests officiated at a solemn meal for the souls, as well as a feast for the forest.[36] This ceremony terminated with the presentation of the klong to the family.[37]

The bones in the klong were then kept in the family temple for a year. At the final funeral ceremony, called Padhi by the Cham Kaphir, as well as by the Cham Bani, the klong was buried with other ancestors under the *kout* or family tombstones.[38]

When the cremation was completed, the priests, relatives, and friends returned to the home of the deceased. To confuse the soul of the deceased, the priests turned their clothes inside out, tied their hair into a knot on their necks, unrolled their turbans, and pretended to be ordinary travelers. A final meal was prepared for the funeral guests, and the host made an offering to the ancestors.

Cult of the Ancestors

The ancestors represented by the bones in the klong were traditionally venerated annually by the wealthy and every 5 or 10 years by the poor, who could not afford annual sacrifices. At the *tabat kut* or worship-of-the-tombs ceremonies, the ancestors received presents. The Cham Kaphir also prayed to their ancestors periodically for special favors or for cures for illness. The family invited priests and a priestess (called a Paja) to the cemetery to offer sacrifices, and they spoke to the ancestors while the family implored the ancestors to accept the priestess as an intermediary. At a given moment, the Paja began to sway and answered, "We accept the homage of our descendants." The ceremony terminated with a feast, and the family returned home.[39]

Level of Civilization

Accurate, up-to-date estimates of Cham literacy are unavailable however, in general, the figures appear to be quite low, with the highest degree of literacy among the Moslems of Tay Ninh and Chau Doc Provinces.

The Cham calendar is partly lunar and partly solar: A new moon marks the beginning and end of each month. The lunar month has a light half, which terminates in the full moon, and a dark half, which is concluded by the new moon.

Time is measured by the duodenary or 12-month cycle. Each of the 12 months is named for an animal; for example, Rat, Buffalo, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Cock, Dog, Boar. The year begins in the spring (April-May) and is composed of 12 lunar months of 30 and 29 days alternately. The months are numbered from 1 to 10, and the 11th and 12th have special names. Every 3 years an extra month is added. Time measurement among the Moslems differs from that of the Brahmans, and both vary from that of the Vietnamese, the official calculation.[40] Most Cham are probably unaware of the calendar and determine the date by the lunar periods.

The names of the days of the week are borrowed from the planets: Adit (sun), Thom (moon), Angar (Mars), But (Mercury), Jip (Jupiter), Shuk (Venus), Tchanchar (Saturn). The day is divided into 12 hours, beginning at the first cockcrow.[41]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Cham customs and taboos vary from village to village depending on the religion (Brahman or Moslem) of the people and the degree of Vietnamese or Montagnard influence on their culture.

Dress

Garments for both men and women consist of a sarong topped by a tunic. The sarong is a band of cotton fabric, usually white or blue and white with a red border, and is generally fastened by a knot on the right side just beneath the armpit. The sarong for Cham men is customarily adorned with an elegant fringe border. Loose-fitting around the legs, the sarong allows considerable freedom of movement. The sarong also serves as a shawl and at times as a turban. Cham women tenaciously maintain that the sarong is traditionally related to their race; they believe that to abandon one's native dress is to throw off "one's past, one's tradition, one's last bit of courage and force."[1] Cham men, however, are slowly abandoning the sarong in favor of wide-bottomed trousers.[2]

The Cham man's tunic, usually black or deep violet silk, resembles that of Vietnamese men. Some men wear a colorful belt at the waist. The tunic for women is of deep green cotton or silk and reaches to the calf of the leg. The tunic fits so snugly that movement is severely limited and for this reason Cham women wear the tunic only in cold weather or for special occasions. The women wear the sarong while doing household chores or while in their own village.

The headdress for Cham men is a black or green turban or a plain scarf wound around the head. Cham women wear a fabric band wound around the head, with the ends allowed to fall around either side of the face. The least movement of the head causes the headdress to unwind, so that it drapes indifferently around the waist and is tied in place with no concern for aesthetic appearance.

Nearly everyone goes barefoot in Cham villages, even on feast days. Occasionally mandarins and lesser notables wear clogs or babouches.

Both men and women are extremely fond of jewelry and own as much as they can afford. Women's jewelry consists of the following: necklaces of strings of glass beads which hang to the waist;[3] earrings of precious metals in the shape of nails, braids of black thread, or disks of black wood 2 centimeters wide encrusted with pieces of metal;[4] anklets, plain or carved, in precious metals, copper, or shell; rings of gold, alternating with thin bands of red cornelian, worn on the thumbs as well as on other fingers.[5] All Cham men like rings; those who live near cities have, in addition, plaited watch chains from which they hang their trinkets, betel-cutting scissors, or elephant hairs mounted on silver, and amulets. Both men and women use silver needles of every size suitable for every purpose from holding the hair and cleaning the teeth to piercing coconuts.

Children wear few garments; when they are not nude, they wear snug little jackets which reach their navels and leave the rest of the body uncovered. Children are, however, covered with innumerable bracelets, necklaces, anklets, earrings, and amulets.

Folk Beliefs

The Cham belief in animistic spirits has traditionally affected virtually every aspect of their existence. These spirits, both good and evil, had to be treated with respect, and at specified times offerings were required to appease them. In addition, the Cham observed certain traditional prohibitions in the hope that the spirits would be prevented from causing misfortune.* These folk beliefs varied according to region and religion and some may have disappeared entirely in some Cham areas.

Trees, and the shadows cast by them, were traditionally thought to hide evil spirits and bear ill omens.[6] Banana trees were especially feared. During pregnancy, Cham women had to avoid a certain Javanese banana which was thought to cause a monster to be born who would torment the family [7] A banana tree was planted above the grave of a woman who died during pregnancy in the belief that the soul of the deceased would stay among the branches and would not haunt the family.[8]

Cham houses are constructed according to an established ritual† with specified materials. Even wealthy Cham avoid building stone or brick houses which might remotely resemble the sacred towers of the Cham deity Po Rome.[9] All wood for construction of a house must be cut from trees in the same area. A tree which falls on branches already on the ground presages evil.[10]

A number of folk beliefs govern activities. within the Cham household. In general, a guest must not enter the bedrooms in a Cham house; exceptions are made for intimate friends and people highly respected within the village. A guest, even an old friend, must never place a kettle on the kitchen tripod—a sacred object.[11] Altars must not be erected to honor the ancestors or the gods that protect the household.[12] Esteem must be shown inanimate as well as animate objects; for example, kitchen utensils broken through ordinary use must not be thrown away but must be kept in a pile near the house until a flood washes them away.[13] Both Brahman and Moslem Cham abstain from sexual relations on Mondays, as Allah was born on that day.[14]

---

* See "Religion," p. 895.

† See discussion of house construction rituals, p. 893.

Since the Cham are primarily farmers, they are extremely careful not to arouse the spirits connected with agriculture. Seed is not bought in another village for fear that the rice spirit will be offended and will seek revenge. Villagers do not speak on the first day of harvest in order to avoid frightening the spirits. During the flax harvest, the Cham pretend to be drunk to insure the preservation of the inebriating properties of the flax. The Cham, especially the Brahmans, fear oxen and do not use them to work the fields; from ancient Brahmanism they have retained the belief that a mythical ox (Kapila) transports the dead to the next world.

Traditionally, a village had to move if one of the villagers died an accidental death. The night before the move, all domestic animals in the village were killed.[15]

Concept of Etiquette

The Cham attach great importance to the teaching and observance of rules of etiquette. Especially rigid are rules affecting the relations between people of different age and rank. A young man shows respect for an older man by addressing him as Uncle or Grandfather; an inferior addresses his superior as Elder Brother.

In greeting a person of superior rank, a young man shows deference by arranging his girdle or crossing the cloth which serves as the equivalent of trousers. If the young man is carrying an umbrella, he will hold it forward toward the person he wishes to honor; then conversation can take place. Throughout the conversation, the young man must avoid swinging his arms, a sign of disrespect; to prevent this, the well-bred Cham clasps his hands together.

The education of a Cham woman is considered complete when she has learned the rudiments of etiquette. For example, she will know that she must never show pleasure in public by laughing. She may, on the other hand, yawn when bored, a sign of good breeding. A woman seeking a favor of a notable must follow a complex procedure requiring great forethought and preparation. She removes the turban from her hair, wraps it about her like a shawl, falls to her knees, and prostrates herself three times at full length on the ground before the notable.[16]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

In the past, an outsider was greeted with immediate hostility, at least by the women, who fled from sight and remained hidden until the visitor proved harmless. Occasionally, months passed before the women resumed their activities in sight of the stranger. The men would receive a stranger politely, offer him a room, and bring him flowers and fruit; however, their pride prevented them from performing any act which might have placed them in a servile position. The Cham would not, for example, pick up an object dropped by the visitor.

Murder by poison was not uncommon in Cham areas. Outsiders passing through Cham regions were warned against this danger. If an outsider violated any local customs, particularly any regarding women, he risked poisoning. As some of the poisons worked very slowly, the person frequently thought he had contracted some disease. The Cham are experts in concocting stupefying drugs and narcotics and can poison the air of a room by blowing noxious vapors through hollow tubes inserted in the walls.

Eating and Drinking Customs

At mealtime, the Cham women spread a mat on the ground and on it place trays containing small bowls of food. The family gathers around the mat, either squatting on their heels or sitting on round pieces of wood. The meals are prepared on a green wood fire, smell strongly of smoke, and consist of rice base with grilled or boiled corn, herb soups, eggplant, squash, cucumber, tree or shrub leaves, fruit flowers, and dried fish. The Cham eat with their fingers or with wooden sticks and Chinese porcelain spoons. They approach the meal with great respect; etiquette forbids an individual to leave the meal before everyone has finished eating. A breach of this rule is called "the removal of the queen," and is considered extremely serious; this violation not only incurs a fine, but is believed to bring ill fortune to the wrongdoer and his companions.[17]

The Cham have a multiplicity of food taboos, which they observe with varying degrees of rigidity. The Cham Bani, as Moslems, are technically forbidden to eat pork and drink alcohol, but, in practice, the restrictions on the latter have been relaxed. The Cham Kaphir do not eat beef. The caste-associated taboos of the Brahmans are particularly complex as they relate to the religious practitioners. Failure of the priests to observe these taboos is believed to shorten their lives.

The Cham do not drink while eating but only after the termination of the meal. Daily beverages consist of water or very hot, weak tea. During ceremonies, the precious jars of rice alcohol are opened, but even then the Cham remain sober and rarely become raucous. Rice alcohol is made by placing a handful of steamed, dried rice, together with a vegetable leaven, into an earthen jar, which the owner then secretly buries in the ground. The longer the jars remain closed, the greater the fermentation of the alcohol; later water is added to the mixture as it is imbibed. A bent bamboo straw is used to suck the liquor from the jars. The person being honored drinks first, then the villagers, and finally the women and children.

Although freely available, opium is generally prohibitively expensive for the Cham. Tobacco is extremely popular and is both chewed and smoked. The tobacco is rolled into a very thin cigarette and smoked in an engraved copper pipe with a tiny bowl and a long stem, or in a short pipe of hand-carved wood or bamboo.[18] The Cham also chew betel quids made by lightly coating a leaf of pepper betel with lye and rolling it around a piece of areca nut.[19]

Customs Relating to Animals

The Cham breed buffaloes, chickens, ducks, goats, dogs, and, occasionally, horses. In deference to one another's religious scruples, the Brahmans raise few pigs, and the Moslems raise no cattle. Chickens, goats, and buffaloes are raised for sacrificial purposes. Buffaloes are also essential to the Cham economy, serving as work animals to plow the fields and draw carts.

Animals are kept in small corrals within the family compound or beneath the house if it is built on pilings.

Customs Relating to Warfare

Pacific by nature, the Cham are unlikely to attack an enemy. Experience has shown, however, that confronted with an aggressor, the Cham will unite and fight in self-defense.*

Entertainment and Celebrations

Music provides the major source of Cham entertainment and is the art form most readily embodying Cham impressions and reveries. Individually, the Cham, old and young, lie on their backs for hours staring into space and humming to themselves. As children, they learn to sing with a group and to play musical instruments.[20] Music plays an important role in Cham festivals and rituals.

In addition to music, chess is very popular among the Cham. Cham children are initiated into its complexities at a tender age. The board, with 64 squares, is identical to the occidental version. Similarly, the point of the game is to check the opposing king; however, generals replace the castles; canoes, the bishops; and fish, the pawns. Children of a less serious nature enjoy games, races, and competitions.[21]

---

* See "Psychological Characteristics," p. 875.

Some festivals provide entertainment in the form of feasting and music. The Tet festival, a new year celebration observed throughout the Republic of Vietnam, begins the 15th day of the 1st lunar month and continues for 1 month.

Just before the Tet celebration, the head of the family wraps a gift and blesses it. The family is then permitted to follow his example. On the 1st day of the festival, everyone proceeds to the forest to make a small spoon of leaves, which are cut into pieces, mixed with alcohol, and poured on the heads of buffaloes, who are then caned several times. Pigs and poultry are slaughtered for the feast and all guests must eat until they drop from exhaustion. Singing and music begin and continue until noon.[22]

A special ceremony, called the Vo La, is performed if there have been no deaths during the year. A rich elder leads the ceremony, offering a leaf containing glutinous rice to the spirits. The gifts to the spirits are cooked over firewood collected during the 10th month from the paddy *rays*. Failure to gather the firewood at the prescribed time is punishable by fine and cancellation of the Tet festival.

Rituals

Cham rituals are extremely complex and are introduced into all phases of existence. Even the most trivial task requires specific rites. Offerings of food and prayers are made to the spirits and are followed by a feast for the participants.[23] In addition to religious ceremonies and rituals for every phase of an individual's life, important agrarian, construction, and dedicatory rites exist.

The Cham lead other groups in Southeast Asia in the variety and individuality of their agrarian rituals.[24] Both Cham Kaphir and Cham Bani recognize three types of sacred ricefields: Hamu Tabung or Tabun, Hamu Klaik Lava, and Hamu Canrov. A ricefield is declared Hamu Tabung (taboo) when a man or animal working the field falls ill and first symptoms are experienced while in the field itself. Nothing can save a Hamu Tabung field—it must be sold, even at a great loss, to Vietnamese Christians in the area. (Vietnamese Buddhists also fear the cursed field and will have nothing to do with it.) [25] The concept for this practice is uncertain: some say the field must be sold because the sickness indicates the field was an ancient burial ground; [26] others, that Cham princes once cultivated the field according to rites which the present-day Cham do not know. Therefore, to avoid offending with the wrong ritual the Cham do not cultivate these fields at all.[27]

Every wealthy landowner has a Hamu Klaik Lava, "Field of Furtive Labor," which is first cultivated under cover of darkness, for plowing and sowing are associated with the crime of sexual violation. In June, the 2d Cham month, early in the morning husband

and wife proceed to their field where they silently plow three furrows and return home. At dawn, as though by accident, the man wanders past the field and expresses surprise at seeing the plowed furrows: "Who labored furtively in my field during the night?" He hurries home to prepare offerings and carries them to the field, for a field that cultivates itself must indeed be consecrated. After a few prayers, the sowing of the field may continue openly.

At the flowering season and at harvesttime, sacrifices are offered when the stalks in the field are tall enough to "hide the doves." The deities are invited to taste the offerings, while the man cuts three stalks of rice and wraps them in cloth. The stalks are passed through a fire of burning eaglewood, offered to the goddess of agriculture (Po-Nagar), then hung in the house until the next year's planting, when they will be sown in the three furrows mysteriously plowed during the night. The remainder of the rice in the Hamu Klaik Lava is then harvested.

The third type of sacred ricefield, the Hamu Canrov, is chosen by the villagers. Usually each village has no more than two or three Hamu Canrov. These fields apparently have no significance beyond the traditional habit of setting aside two or three Hamu Canrov to be sown before all the other fields can be worked. The sacred fields are cultivated either at midmorning or at dusk, after a priest has offered a sacrifice to the gods. The owner of a Hamu Canrov and the priest pray to Po-Olvah-Ta-Ala, "God of the Underworld," to bless the buffaloes, permit cultivation of the fields, and grant a good harvest. The owner then plows three furrows around the field, anoints the ground with oil, sows a handful of rice, and drives his buffaloes home. The following day he returns to complete the cultivation and the sowing.[28] No special ritual seems to attend the harvesting of this field.

Another Cham agrarian rite consists of tossing a handful of paddy on a portion of the ricefield before sowing the whole field. A chicken is killed and its blood sprinkled on the plants as they begin to appear. These sacred stalks are then transplanted to a corner of the field, and they must not be touched. A similar offering accompanies the harvest; in addition, a shrub, the *dong-dinh,* is symbolically planted to encourage the gathering of a healthy crop.[29]

Annual rituals attend the rebuilding of dams *(banoek)* and the cleaning and repairing of irrigation canals *(rabong)*. Both Po-Klong-Garai, the deified king reputed to have invented irrigation, and Po-Nagar, the goddess of agriculture, are invoked during these rituals. During the first Cham month, when the canals are being cleared and repaired, the Ong-Banoek, "Chief of the Dams," presents offerings to these gods.

Then for several days, the Ong-Banoek lives in a hut at the point where the water enters his own field. With offerings and prayers to the gods to render the dam unbreakable, the Ong-Banoek takes three stakes and plants them in the riverbed. Against these he leans three pieces of wood, three stones, three bundles of liana, three mounds of sod, and some leaves. Once more he prays to the gods, informing them that construction and repair have begun. Armed with building equipment, the people continue to work while the Ong-Banoek remains in his hut. When the dam is completed, the Ong-Banoek returns home and prepares a feast to which he invites the priests. When the rice is in flower and at harvestime, the Ong-Banoek makes further offerings to the protective deities.

If drought occurs after a planting, the Cham gather various offerings for a collective sacrifice to the gods. Led by an orchestra, the priests and all the villagers go to the dams to ask the gods for rain. Periodic sacrifices are also made to assure regular rainfall. Varying with the village, these sacrifices may include a white buffalo, black chickens, or black goats. Formerly, a child, preferably from a wealthy family, was kidnapped by the Ong-Banoek and drowned in the river as an offering to the rain gods.[30]

Construction of a house requires a multitude of rituals. First the designated spot is enclosed within a palisade of dead wood—any foliage creating shade would be an ill omen. Openings in this enclosure allow the gods to enter and assist the builders. Before the first (northeast) column can be erected, a hole must be dug for the foundation. Then an amulet—a sheet of lead engraved with mystical characters—is thrown into this hole by the owner. Each column is consecrated in this manner. Usually only one column per day is consecrated and fixed in position. When the framework of the roof is completed, an amulet must be introduced at every point where the roof touches. Special materials are used to thatch the roof; bulrushes are taboo, as they are endowed with evil powers. The completed house is taboo until the threshold has been crossed by a cat, followed by the owner. The latter prostrates himself on the ground where his bed will rest. Then, rising, he begins to recite all the locations to be avoided when choosing a spot for a new house:

> I will flee far from the haunts of the White Ant. I will turn aside from the dwelling-places of demons and evil spirits. Sloping places I will shun . . . In short I will never be found where evil is to be expected.[31]

The building of Cham carts also requires rituals. Completion of a cart calls for a dedication ceremony. The wheelwright, often attended by one or two priests, lights candles, makes an offering to the gods, sprinkles the cart with holy water, and purifies it with a thorough scouring in the river. Then, while making a few light gashes here and there on the cart, he says, "Cart, woe betide you if ever the fancy takes you not to roll your best." The ceremony terminates in a feast.[32]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

For centuries two religions, Brahmanism and Islam, have dominated the lives of the Cham of the Republic of Vietnam. The influence of the former was evident in the country as early as the second century when the three Indian gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva (and the Sakti, or wives of the last two, Uma and Laksmi) were venerated.[1] Although Islam was introduced at a later, undetermined date, inscriptions indicate the existence of a Moslem community in Champa in the 10th century.[2] Reportedly, Cham kings spent vast sums on temples, each one a domain in itself, containing large numbers of priests, slave dancers, servants, musicians, and quarters for the women and their slaves.[3] Ruins of these vast temple complexes reveal the important position held by religion during the imperial phase of Champa history.

Approximately three-quarters of the Cham population now practice a corrupt form of Brahmanism altered by local superstition. This group calls itself Cham Kaphir from the Arabic for "infidel," or Cham Jat, meaning Cham by race. The remaining Cham—about 6,000 according to one source [4]—who adhere to a modified form of Mohammedanism, call themselves Cham Bani from the Arabic for "Sons of the Prophet." Excellent relations exist between the Brahman and Moslem Cham, and the priests of one faith attend, on invitation, the ceremonies of the other. Several gods are mutually venerated by people of both faiths.

Brahman Cham

The Cham cult is linked with orthodox Brahmanism through certain sacred rites which include: The worship of the phallic symbol *(linga)* and the white bull of Siva (Nandi) ; the bath of purification; the rinsing of the mouth after the sacrifice; religious initiation or rebirth; the custom of placing a gold leaf on the mouth of the deceased to insure immortality; the ceremonial use of *kuca* grass, strings of beads, and the holy shell offerings to the fire; the fear of ritualistic mistakes; inviting the gods to participate in sacrificial ceremonies; considering the northeast direction as sacred; and reciting the prayers that accompany the rites.[5]

The religious practices of the Brahman Cham today are so mixed with native and Moslem elements that the people and priests have lost all memory of the civilization of India, the significance of the Hindu gods or the monuments representing them, and the meaning of the prayers which they recite. Originally, worship of the Indian god Siva formed the basis of the Brahman Cham religion. Over the centuries, however, reality and myth were blended—the historical works and deeds of some early kings and princes who encouraged the practice of the Sivaist cult fused with the legends developed around the primitive gods. Consequently, some of these monarchs became deified and replaced the orthodox Brahman gods in the cult's religious pantheon. Among the numerous deities, three are especially venerated: Po-Nagar, Po Rome, and Po-Klong-Garai. The last two are Cham royalty, deified through legend.

Principal Brahman Deities

Po-Nagar, or more completely Po-Yang-Ineou-Nagar, "Goddess Mother of the Kingdom," is the wife of Siva and the most powerful of the deities. She is honored as the goddess of ricefields and abundance; she reputedly taught the Cham agricultural methods, with the exception of irrigation. She is also called Muk Juk, the "Black Lady" and Pata Kumei, the "Queen of Women."[6] Many daughters were born of this goddess, some good and some evil. Several of the former are still revered: Po-Nagar-Dara, Po-Bja-Tikuh, and Tara-Nai-Anaih. The evil daughters, believed to have the power to afflict man with disease, are offered sacrifices of appeasement.[7]

The Vietnamese have adopted the goddess Po-Nagar under the name of Ba-Chua-Ngoc, honoring her with feasts, music, and dancing twice a year, in the 2d and 8th months of the Vietnamese lunar year.[8] Her statue is located in a temple at Nhatrang, where the Vietnamese present their offerings to her.[9]

Po Rome, a princeling who governed the Cham between 1627 and 1651, revolted against the Vietnamese, who captured and kept him in prison where he died. Legend may have confused this minor prince with the great warrior King Binasuor, who ruled between 1328 and 1373 and was the last defender of Cham freedom.

In any case, legend concerning Po Rome as a deity states that he was born of a virgin mother and was appointed guardian of the king's buffaloes. One day a dragon appeared to prophesy Po Rome's promising future. When the royal astrologer warned the king of the young man's future strength, the king abdicated his throne to Po Rome and gave him his daughter in marriage, as well as two other wives. No sooner had Po Rome ascended to the throne than he lost his crown through the connivances of his second wife. At that time, the guardian deity of the Cham was shut up in a tree, which they called the Kraik; as long as the tree lived no evil could befall their group. The second wife, incited by her father, the King of Annam (Vietnam), who coveted the Cham land, pretended to be afflicted with a grave disease curable only by the destruction of the Kraik. So great was Po Rome's love for this wife, he felled the tree on which hung the destiny of his people. The Vietnamese invaded the kingdom, captured Po Rome, and killed him.[10]

Po-Klong-Garai, also conceived by a virgin mother, was a leper at birth. He worked as a buffalo keeper until he, too, was visited by a dragon, who cured his disease. From that moment the boy's supernatural powers began to manifest themselves: He caused the neck of the squash to be crooked and the vein of the banana leaf to be prominent. Aware of the boy's powers, the royal astrologer gave Po-Klong-Garai his daughter in marriage. After ruling for 6 years at Shri-Banoeuy, Po-Klong-Garai founded Bal-Hangov where he ruled for 10 years, building palaces, digging canals, erecting dams, and teaching the Cham the technique of irrigation. After a 54-year reign (1151–1205), he ascended to heaven at the request of the gods.[11]

In addition to these three principal deities, there is a series of minor or secondary deities. Two of the most important are Paja Yan, Goddess of Heaven, and Po-Yan-Dari, Goddess of Illness.

The Goddess of Heaven, Paja Yan or "Heavenly Paja," although not represented by any specific image, is invited to all sacrificial ceremonies. She distributes happiness, cures diseases, and encourages the afflicted. Offerings of fruit or vegetables are usually made to her on the first day of the waning moon. Paja Yan inhabited the earth at one time and resuscitated the dead until Po Jata, God of the Heaven, wearied of her violation of heavenly laws and had her placed on the moon. Divested of her power to bring the dead back to life, she nevertheless gives them happiness and good health. Her face appears in the moon when it is full. Whenever she prostrates herself before her superior Po Aditjak, the Sun God, an eclipse of the moon occurs and the Cham celebrate by offering sacrifices to her. The souls of the righteous join Paja Yan after death. This legend is accepted by some Cham and strongly contested by others.

Po-Yan-Dari, Goddess of Illness, lives in caves, thickets, and especially in artificial cairns. The symbol of this goddess is an upright stone upon which is drawn a white horizontal line representing her mouth. In a dream the goddess reveals herself to an individual—usually an old man—indicating the stone to represent her, and where it must be placed for offering of sacrifices. Under the direction of the dreamer, a *tanoh yan* or sacred enclosure is made. The stone is placed under a tree, a circular area around it is cleared, and stones are placed around the edge of the clearing with an opening on one side. Thereafter, a sacrifice of rice, chickens, betel, and alcohol must be made to Po-Yan-Dari upon entering the forest. Subsequently, for someone leaving the forest, a sufficient offering consists of placing a stone on the enclosure, but always to the outer side.[12]

Combined with these Indian practices and beliefs, the Brahman Cham have retained a number of pre-Hindu beliefs common to neighboring areas: agrarian rites, traces of which persist among the Malays; the sacrifice of buffaloes, practiced by the tribes of Indochina; and the employment of priestesses, found also among the Bahnar and Sedang tribes.[13] These are examples of the more important religious customs which have survived from the ancient Cham civilization and are still practiced in conjunction with the Brahman beliefs.

Moslem influence is evident in the traditions and worship of the Brahman cult. Allah, the Prophet, and the saints of Islam are included in the Brahman pantheon. The acceptance of Allah as a Brahman god is so complete that the Cham Kaphir believe the Moslems acquired Ovloh (or Allah, meaning god) from them.

Brahman Priests

Cham Kaphir priests form the *basaih* or *basheh* caste, the last remnants of the Brahman kingdom of Campa. They elect three high priests who serve for life under the title of po adhia and become the priests of the three great deities; Po-Nagar, Po Rome, and Po-Klong-Garai.

The basaih priests do not devote their entire attention toward the priesthood. In addition to their priestly functions, they are allowed to cultivate the fields or to engage in any other occupation of their choosing. The ability to become a basaih priest is inherited and transmitted through the male lineage. Those not wishing to become priests choose other professions and are released from practicing any of the religious abstinences of the caste.[14]

From the age 10, the sons of basaih priests learn to read the rituals which they, as priests, will be required to know from memory. As soon as they begin their studies, the basaih wear a white gown: a piece of cotton rolled around the waist and reaching the feet, held up by a belt with brown and red trimmings, a long white tunic fastened by strings, and a white turban made from a band of linen with red fringe tied in a knot on the head. During ceremonies, this costume is supplemented by a white miter with red and blue embroidery and a copper, or gold ring inset with a large stone. As soon as facial hair begins to appear, the growth of a mustache and goatee is usually encouraged. Consecration into the priesthood is effected during their 25th year, obligating the young men to marry.[15]

In their role as priests, the basaih are responsible for various functions and observances. Invited to many Brahman ceremonies, the basaih perform numerous rituals, especially during cremations (which require the permission of the priests). They also teach the children to read and write, and are responsible for the observance of certain caste-associated food taboos.* The basaih maintain good relations with the Moslem *imams* (prayer leaders), sometimes offering them gifts during Ramadan, the month of fasting; however, the basaih will not enter mosques.[16]

The *tchamenei (camenei* or *samenei)* form a priestly class below the basaih. Acting as deacons to the basaih, they serve as guardians of the cult utensils and keepers of the temple. Before making offerings to the deities, they adorn the temple statues and arrange the utensils in the traditional manner. Like the basaih, the tchamenei dress in all-white garments and observe the same abstinences; they have merged with the kathar or kadhar, singers and musicians who perform during many rituals, also dress in white, and observe the same abstinences.

The paja or "Princesses," apparently at the same level as the tchamenei and kathar, are priestesses or prophetesses who foretell the future and serve as intermediaries at many religious ceremonies.[17] Their religion combines animism, Brahmanism, and Islam. They invoke the deities by dancing and chanting in a state of ecstasy until they believe the gods possess them; then they transmit messages from the divinities to the people.[18]

The paja are subject to the same abstinences as the basaih, as well as food restrictions which apply only to them.* Sworn to celibacy, the paja must abstain from sexual relations; punishment for breach of this rule is immediate death of the couple. If a married woman declares herself paja, her husband divorces her.[19]

Selection of a paja involves several ceremonies. A girl is designated by a paja to serve as her assistant, *monvis-asit-anok-soh,* or "Child Who is the Joy of Humankind." At a feast, the Yan-Trun-Pvoc or "Praying the Deity or Reveal Itself," offered by the retiring paja, the priestess and her assistant perform a ritualistic dance, the Tamja. The investiture is completed at a temple ceremony dedicated to Paja Yan, "the Goddess of Heaven," one year after the feast. All the guests who participated in the feast are expected to come after taking a purifying bath. Sacrifices are offered and candles lit to invoke the goddess.

The paja, paja-designate, and all the guests prostrate themselves. While burning candles flicker, the assistant goes into a trance—a sign that the goddess is present and approves of the choice. If the candlelight goes out, this signifies that Paja Yan is not in accord, and a new assistant must be selected. The paja-designate then returns to her home and former way of life.

---

* See "Eating and Drinking Customs." p. 889.

The *modvon* belongs to no caste but serves as an officiating minister who accompanies the paja in the performance of household and family ceremonial rituals. He offers sacrifices to the gods to cure the sick or foretell the future. He chants while playing his one-headed drum, the *baranon,* observes the same abstinences as the Basaih, and dresses in an all-white tunic. After he has learned to play the drum and memorized the ritual chants, the modvon is admitted to priesthood in an elaborate ceremony.[20]

Although the paja is the most powerful of the priestesses, the *kain yan,* "She Who is Near the Gods," often substitutes for the paja. Aided by a modvon, the kain yan dances and offers presents to the gods. Family priestesses common to the Moslems as well as Brahmans, the *crvak rija,* are chosen at the age of 20 by consensus of the family whose members all bear the same name. On days of sacrifice they must dress in white.[21] These women belonging to no caste are permitted to marry but are expected to abstain from eating pork and sand lizard.

The lowest caste of priests, the *ong-banoek,* serve as masters of the dams and irrigation canals, officiating at the annual ceremonies for the repair of the waterways.[22] They dress in white, abstain from eating the *hakan* fish, and abstain from sexual relations during the period of these ceremonies.

Brahman Religious Ceremonies

The goddess Po-San-Anaih (believed to be Po-Nagar's daughter or Po-Nagar herself) is honored at the first feast of the Cham year, beginning on the 10th day of the 2d month and lasting for 5 days. To prepare for this fete, the Cham of the plain of Phan Rang erect four rectangular huts of bamboo and palm leaves at the edge of the sea. The Brahman Cham perform their ceremonial rituals in three of the leaf huts; the Moslem Cham conduct their ceremonies in the fourth hut.

Four Brahman priests gather in the first hut; one officiates, the rest assist. Before the celebrant is placed the sacrificial tray containing the cult accouterments: a banana leaf on which rest figures of rice paste and a layer of sand on a wattle tray. Using rice flour, the basaih priest forms the shape of a tortoise in the sand. From time to time, he places a piece of eaglewood on the brazier, sprinkles holy water, snaps his fingers, waves his arms like a bird, and clasps his hands. Throughout the ceremony he reads and chants the ritual accompanied by an assistant who plays on the *san* or seashell.

In the second hut, the offerings consist of fabric to be fashioned into garments for the Brahman priests and containers of food. Participants in this hut include: a modvon playing his baranon (drum), a kathar strumming the *kanik* (violin), a kain yan dancing to the music, and various other priests playing instruments or preparing offerings. The kain yan, the celebrant, in a white costume and red turban, dances holding a handkerchief in one hand, waving a fan with the other. Near the east entry the flesh of a sacrificed goat is prepared for the offering. The music stops, the kain yan places offerings of rice paste on trays and turns to face the sea. The music begins anew and the kain yan presents a tray to each of the gods, who are believed to be near the rolls of fabric.

A modvon and paja occupy the third hut. Here the offerings are the traditional food and betel quids, and beside the doorway is placed a tray filled with paste replicas of men and sacrificial buffaloes offered during the year. Nearby, women prepare goat hash. *Lum gat*, or rolls of linen, are placed around the west wall.

In the fourth hut, the Cham Bani, who practice the Moslem faith, celebrate. Three imams in white garments and turbans squat on a platform at the rear of the hut; behind them stretches a cotton banner decorated with soldiers, people bearing offerings, buffaloes hitched to a plow, and other sketches depicting Cham way of life. The imams rinse their mouths with water and purify themselves by touching their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and navel with water; next they recite prayers from the Koran while the women prepare food for them.

After prayers by both Kaphirs and Banis have been completed, the priests partake of a feast inside their respective huts, while the people consume their feast outside. The ceremony terminates with the paste replicas of the buffaloes and the men being cast into the sea.[23]

Bon Kate (or Kate) and Bon Cabur (pronounced Tiabour), the most solemn of the Cham feasts, are celebrated on the 5th day of the 5th Cham month (September-October)[24] and the 1st of the 9th Cham month (January-February) respectively.[25] These fetes honor ancestors and the three principal deities. For 5 days, everyone—priests, old and young people—gathers to pray and offer sacrifices to the gods. The Bon Kate feasts are offered in the *kalan* (Cham towers) and the *bumon* (leaf huts); Bon Cabur sacrifices are made in the towers and in private homes.[26]

Masculine deities dominate the Bon Kate feasts and feminine deities the Bon Cabur. The noon sacrifices are preceded by a purifying bath; then prayers are offered to the spirits of the deceased. For both feasts the main celebrants include: A po adhia (high priest), a kathar (musician), a ba bon (master of ceremonies), and a tchamenei (deacon). The offerings, the same for both feasts, consist of a goat, cooked rice, a large tray of rice cakes, rice alcohol, lemon water, areca, and betel. The statue of the god or goddess to be honored is washed in lemon water before the sacrifice. Eaglewood is kindled and a large candle lit in front of the statue, while small burning candles may flank the sides. When sacrifices are offered in private homes, a tchamenei, a kathar, and a paja priestess and her assistant, a modvon, officiate.[27]

Moslem Cham

The Islam professed by the Cham Bani of the coastal provinces of the Republic of Vietnam, corrupted by pre-Moslem pagan practices and local superstitions, bears little resemblance to the religion of Mecca. Few imams (prayer leaders) in this region read Arabic —they merely memorize and recite the suras (sections of the Koran), only vaguely recalling the meaning of the passages. Ramadan, the month of fasting, is observed in its entirety by the priests, but observance for laymen is only 3 days. The five daily prayers are rarely recited, except on Fridays and during Ramadan. The study of the Koran has fallen into disuse; in fact, few copies of the text can be found in this region. Even the book's proper name, "Koran," is scarcely known; instead it is called the Tapuk Acalam, "Book of the Prophet Mohammed," or Kitah Elhamdu, "Book of Praise." In place of the Koran, these Cham possess a much respected sacred book called Nourshavan, which may be copied only during Ramadan for the price of a buffalo paid to the transcriber.[28] The prescribed Moslem ablutions are often neglected, but when performed, consist of digging a hole in the sand and pantomiming the act of extracting water. Circumcision, no longer customary, is only simulated by an imam who performs the ritual using a wooden knife.

Under the influence of the Malays, the Moslem Cham inhabiting the Tay Ninh and Chau Doc areas have remained more orthodox in their beliefs and practices than have the Cham of the coastal provinces. Many of the Tay Ninh and Chau Doc Cham have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Fervently attached to their religion, these Cham center their lives around the mosque and village Koranic school, where the children learn the Koran in Arabic aided by Malayan commentaries. A few Cham continue their education in Kelantan or Mecca.

The Cham Bani of Tay Ninh and Chau Doc, appalled by the religious liberties taken by the Cham Bani of the coastal provinces, have occasionally tried to urge their brethren to return to the orthodox beliefs and practices. For the most part, however, such efforts have had little effect. The coastal people, influenced by ancient animistic beliefs and by the penetration of religious elements from neighboring areas, have persisted in strict adherence to only a few of the Islamic practices; for example, some food taboos—especially prohibitions on pork—and the orientation of buildings toward Mecca.[29]

Although the significance ascribed to the Islamic orthodox religion and the degree to which the religion is practiced differ widely between the Cham Bani in the coastal provinces and the Cham Bani in the Tay Ninh and Chau Doc Provinces, the principal deities, priestly hierarchy, mosque characteristics, and religious ceremonies are basically the same.

Principal Moslem Deities

The Moslem deity Allah, also recognized by the Brahman Cham, is venerated by the Cham Bani as Ovloh, the indeterminate, bodiless god. Mohammed, the Prophet of God, is revered by the Cham Bani as Mahamat and personified as Po Rathulak—a derivation of the Arabic name Rasul Allah, meaning Prophet. Other deities in the Moslem Cham pantheon include: Djiburaellak or Gabriel, created by Mahamat; and Po Hoava or Eve, equated with the Brahman Cham deity Po-Nagar, "Goddess Mother of the Kingdom," and Po-Yan-Amo or Adam, "Father of Men," both created by Ovloh.[30]

Moslem Priests

The head of the Moslem Cham priestly hierarchy, the Po Gru or Ong Gru, "Leader of the Faithful," is chosen from among the imams, officiating ministers or prayer leaders who are scattered throughout most of the Moslem Cham villages. The Po Gru is invested with the authority to appoint additional imams, to preside at many religious ceremonies, and to head the mosques.

Ranking below the imams and named by the Po Gru to act as deacons are the *katips* who read and recite in the mosques. In a still lower rank are the *modins* or *moduons,* corresponding to the Brahman modvon. Men entering the priesthood shave their heads and faces. In addition to the priests, *raja* priestesses (with functions similar to those of the Brahman paja) play prominent roles in certain Moslem ceremonies. Raja are permitted to marry, but are expected to abstain from eating sand lizard.

The rank of the priest is signified by the length of the scarlet and gold tassels on his turban. Aside from this distinction, an all-white costume—sarong, tunic, scarf draped over the shoulders, and a large turban with a red border—is common to priests of all ranks. For ceremonies, the turban is more elaborately arranged; first the priest places a conical cap on his head, then a cardboard disc which allows the tip of the cone to pass through; finally, the turban is wrapped around the disc.[31] A staff made from a long rattan stalk is carried by the priest. The Po Gru's staff has a basket attached to the base, formed by braiding together the roots of the rattan stalk.[32]

Mosque Characteristics

The mosques of the Cham Bani consist of long, narrow huts built to face west toward Mecca and enclosed by high palisades. At the threshold are seven flat rocks where the officiating priests wash their feet before entering. Inside the mosque two rows of posts support the thatch roof. The interior is furnished with mats spread on the floor, a drum to summon the faithful to worship, a pulpit *(mimbar)*, and a sack suspended from the roof to hold the prayer books.[33] Ordinarily, in central Vietnam, one mosque serves several villages; however, in Tay Ninh and Chau Doc Provinces, each Moslem village has its own mosque.

Moslem Religious Ceremonies

On Fridays, the Moslem Cham gather in the mosque to venerate Ovloh and Po-Debata-Thor, "Father of Heavens"—who perhaps may have been confused with Ovloh. The general prayer services, continuing for an hour or more, require the participation of one Po Gru, two imams, two katips, and a modin. Although the Koran requires a quorum of 40, few laymen attend these services, except in Tay Ninh and Chau Doc. At the beginning of the service, the priests spread a white cloth over the pulpit; then, facing the pulpit, they worship Ovloh, prostrating themselves one after the other. The modin prays and beats the drum three times while two imams pray face to face, holding each other's ears; then the imams move beside the Po Gru, who is kneeling before the pulpit. The Po Gru and the imams, joined by the two katips, prostrate themselves eight times before the pulpit. Mounting the pulpit, the Po Gru reads Koranic verses written on a cloth scroll. The worshipers respond by invoking Ovloh, asking for riches and happiness. The service ends with a feast including wine which is consumed by the priests and the laymen.

The Moslem Cham perform a ceremony called the Tubah to cleanse the aged of their sins. The family invites the Po Gru, imams, and katips to preside at the ritual which takes place in a hut erected for the occasion. Inside the hut the ritual articles are arranged: a length of white fabric, two candles, a tray with bowls of areca, betel, and water. The Po Gru leads the assembly in prayer, then the elder person who is to be cleansed recites alone. The Tubah concludes with a feast and general prayer session.[34]

The observance of Ramadan, the month of fasting, is celebrated by the Moslem priests. During this solemn month they are expected to remain in the mosque and abstain from eating certain foods. On the eve of the fast, each priest takes to the mosque the few necessities he will need: a mat for his bed, a lacquered wooden cube for a pillow, cigarettes, and facilities for preparing tea and betel. He unrolls the palm leaves engraved with sacred verses and suspends his string of amber beads on the wall. Throughout the fast he performs the necessary daily rites: nine ablutions, five prayers, and a nightly salaam, which will absolve him of all past, present, and future sins.[35]

An elaborate 3-day festival called the Raja, celebrated in the 9th month of the Cham year (December-January), is primarily a Moslem fete, but some Brahman Cham observe it as well.[36] This festival may be compared to the Bon Kate and Bon Cabur feasts of the Brahman Cham.[37]

For the occasion a special hut is erected in the family compound; additional huts accommodate the guests invited to the festival. Inside the principal hut, sheets of white cotton have been spread. On the altar, shaped like a rude trough, trays of betel and flowers are arranged to represent the gods; before the altar, trays of food are arranged as offerings. Paper figures of animals, junks, and cartwheels hang from the ceiling. In the center of the room is a brightly colored swing to accommodate the officiating raja priestess for whom the festival is named. At least three imams also participate in this ceremony. An orchestra comprising a flute, violin, gongs, cymbals, tambourines, and several drums is conducted by the modin, the principal male participant. Under his direction the orchestra plays during intervals when the raja rests in her swing.

Throughout the first 1½ days, the raja dances, sings, gnashes her teeth, invokes the spirits and gods, and eventually reaches a state of ecstasy in an effort to appease the souls of the ancestors. Meanwhile the imams recite prayers, and the people respond by crying "Hurrah!" At the appropriate moment the raja lights a torch of mountain hemp and waves it before the people; feigning great fear, they run screaming from the hut.

In the middle of the 2d night, the raja throws a veil over her face, and everyone prostrates himself. Lying on the ground wrapped in a shroud, she trembles and moves about while the modin appeals to the souls of the departed. Eventually, the raja rises and dances with great frenzy. Intermittently, feasts are served and the deities invited to partake.

At dawn of the 2d day, a toy boat, roughly carved from a block of wood, is moved through the air by one of the participants to simulate a ship crossing the ocean. This represents the vessel once regularly sent from China to collect the tribute exacted from the vassal state, Champa. A rag monkey, representing the tax collector, is presented offerings of cakes, eggs, and fruit. The people dance and argue over the food, finally consuming it. They all fall on the hut, tearing it to pieces, while the raja rests in her swing.

At noon of the 3d day, the priests and orchestra conduct the raja to the river, where she entrusts the symbolical boat to the water, concluding the ceremony. Other ceremonies are performed by the raja during the year in case of illness or to fulfill a wish.[38]

Effect of Religion on Cham Development

Rituals and superstitious beliefs keep the majority of the Cham in bondage to their past. Since every task must be accompanied by its particular rite, economic and social advancements are considerably impeded. Indeed, reform is virtually impossible as long as fear of retribution by the evil spirits limits activities to those sanctioned by ancestral practice. However, in Tay Ninh and Chau Doc, where the tenets of Islam have been strengthened, a small degree of cultural, social, and economic development has been achieved.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Type of Economy

The Cham economy is primarily agricultural. The chief activity is the cultivation of rice either in irrigated fields or in dry upland fields called rays. The irrigated fields are generally restricted to rice cultivation, while secondary crops of corn, tobacco, castor beans, cassava, peanuts, and vegetables—in addition to upland rice—are grown in the rays.[1]

The Cham usually employ a gravity irrigation system. The water flows along canals leading from the local streams to the individual rice fields and is directed by dams of stones, mud, and leaves. Where the ricefields are elevated above the stream, a system called *norias* is employed, whereby the water is raised in buckets attached to a continuous chain turned by the water current.[2]

The upland rays, or dry fields, are cultivated by the slash-and-burn method. This primitive, destructive type of cultivation consists of cutting all brush and trees and then setting fire to the area in order to clear it for planting. These fields are neither harrowed nor irrigated. The rich humus topped with the layers of ashes produces fine crops for a few years. When the soil nutrients are depleted in a given ray, the Cham abandon it and move to another area where the destructive slash-and-burn process is repeated.[3]

Cham agricultural methods are exceedingly primitive. Sowing, transplanting, and harvesting are done by hand, and cultivation is carried out with buffaloes attached to a simple wooden plow. Threshing is achieved by forcing a pair of yoked buffaloes to walk around and around on the stalks to separate the grain from the chaff. After the grain is winnowed by the old women of the village, it is placed in a mortar or a hollow tree trunk and is beaten by two women wielding heavy batons.

The crops are continually menaced by droughts, floods, and hungry wild beasts. To guard against the latter, a watchman sits in a hut erected on pilings in the midst of the ricefields and scares the animals away by beating a drum, blowing on a conch shell, or simply shouting.[4]

The Cham women bear the major responsibility for agricultural activities. The men cut down the trees for the rays and harrow the ground for the irrigated field, but the women remove the brush, attend to the sowing, transplanting, harvesting, and the shelling and crushing of the grain.

Hunting and fishing play minor roles in the Cham economy. The Cham trap game with nets and by using beaters and dogs, rather than by hunting with guns, lances, and crossbows, as do some of their neighbors. During the dry season, they burn whole hillsides to find the turtles and certain types of rats which are considered delicacies. Once bold navigators, the Cham today rarely own fishing boats. They fish by placing nets behind leafy dams, and the meager catch resulting from this inefficient method must be supplemented by dry fish bought from the Vietnamese.[5]

The suspicious nature of the Cham people generally prevents them from taking jobs with fixed salaries, as they fear they will be cheated. They will not work as household servants, coolies in factories, carters, gardeners, rickshaw pullers, interpreters, postal employees, orderlies, or accountants. They generally prefer to earn their living by farming and hunting or in occupations where they have little contact with other people, such as wood cutting and collecting.[6]

Special Arts

The few Cham handcrafts are primarily related to weaving and cartmaking. Formerly weavers of fine brocades, decorative silks, and rice cloth, Cham women now make a sturdy, warm, lightweight cloth for turbans, sarongs, and scarfs. Europeans are particularly fond of this cloth and buy it frequently.[7]

Cartmaking is the one artisan industry in which the Cham excel. Cham carts have a forked-beam framework held in place by two transverse bars. The enormous wheels enclosed within the framework are each attached to a separate axle, all of which meet beneath the cart in a rattan binding; this arrangement frees the wheels from turning parallel to one another. The originality of the cart is in the independence of the wheels and the framework, which prevents the load from tipping over. When a rut is too deep, the wheel off the ground ceases to turn, the framework drags along the edges of the road and the vehicle is transformed into a sled. The carts are the only reliable means of transport in areas where only buffaloes can pass through the mud during the rainy season.[8]

The Cham also engage in a number of small industries. Beekeeping produces wax for medicinal capsules and for the candles essential to most ceremonies. Resin torches are manufactured and sold to the Vietnamese. Medicines, whose formulas are jealously guarded and transmitted from generation to generation, are made from animal and vegetable products and are sold to neighboring groups as well as among the Cham. Poisons and narcotics are concocted from toxic vegetable substances readily available in the region and are sold in the open market.

Trade

The Cham trade regularly with their neighbors. They exchange salt, copper wire, tobacco, and dried fish for the spices, cereal, chickens, and fruits of the Montagnard tribes. At one time, the Cham served as intermediary merchants between the Montagnards and the Vietnamese, but it is uncertain if this trade relationship still prevails. The Cham and Vietnamese also engage in trade; the Cham exchange resin torches and carts for the dried fish and betel of the Vietnamese.[9]

The Cham in Chau Doc Province supplement their agricultural earnings with profits from small commerce. They buy paddy from their neighbors and transport it to Saigon by boat along with corn, tobacco, and handwoven cloth. They also peddle their wares from village to village two or three times a month.

Property System

In the Cham family, women own the property—the house and most of the animals—and pass it on to their daughters or to their sons when there are no daughters. The Cham of Chau Doc and Tay Ninh Provinces own the land on which their houses are situated. Under the French, rich Cham bought up the land and allotted it to their people, and some even invested in neighboring village land.[10] In other Cham areas, communal property, owned by the village, is divided and distributed to the villagers, who pay rent for the right to cultivate it.

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Political Organization and Leadership

Since the Annamese conquest in 1471, the sociopolitical organization of the Cham has lost all semblance of national character and is but a reflection of the organization of their conquerors. Each village or *noc,* comprising several hamlets, is governed by a *gia-lang* or "village patriarch," and a corps of notables elected by the people.

The patriarch bears the major responsibility for the enforcement of customs and mores, the judging of offenders, and the celebration of rituals. He alone is exempt from taxes. The position of gia-lang is hereditary if the village survives; that is, if it remains in the same place. When a child succeeds his father as patriarch and is too young to judge matters properly, the village notables may assist him, but his decision is final. During ritual ceremonies the patriarch holds the incense burner before the altar, a sign assuring his power. Abdication of the patriarch may be impelled when the village moves to another location due to famine, accidental death, or change of ray. If the change proves beneficial, he who suggested the move becomes the new village patriarch.[1]

The number of village notables varies from 5 to 15, depending on the wealth of the population. They are personally responsible for insuring the public safety, watching over the management of the communal land, and assuring the collection of taxes. The notables enjoy no special privileges, but are subject to the same obligations as other villagers.

A number of villages (8 to 12) are organized into a canton, administered by a chief elected from among the notables. The chief of the canton serves as intermediary between the village notables and the Quan or district administration, the largest local administrative unit.

Under French protection, the Cham enjoyed relative autonomy. In areas where Cham and Vietnamese lived close together, the Cham were permitted to elect their own representatives to serve in equal capacity with those of the Vietnamese at the district level. The Cham lacked sufficient education to fill positions above this level. It is uncertain whether this political organization still exists in the Cham areas.[2]

With the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and the creation of the Republic of Vietnam, the problems of establishing a rapprochement between the Cham and the Vietnamese became acute. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam has taken measures to incorporate the Cham into the political organization of the nation. The Cham themselves prefer to remain separate from the Vietnamese; they strongly believe that only through isolation can they retain their cultural identity.

Legal System

Among the Cham, justice is rendered at a level relative to the gravity of the crime. Minor disagreements are settled by the parties involved. Petty offenses are traditionally judged by the village notables. Plaintiffs may choose appeal to the district or Quan level if they are dissatisfied with judgment of the village notables. In theory, more serious crimes must be submitted by the village and canton authorities to the Quan notables, who hand down judgment in accordance with the Vietnamese legal code. The district chief, in turn, is supposed to transmit all judgments he has rendered to the provincial authorities for review.[3] In practice, however, the village chiefs and notables may still settle these graver crimes as they once did. Formerly, they would place the guilty person in a sort of pillory, order him caned an appropriate number of times, humiliate him by shaving a cross on his head, and expel him from the local region.[4]

Subversive Influences

As far as could be determined, there have been no reports of either the presence or absence of subversive elements and activities among the Cham. Being a passive group, the Cham are probably cooperative with both the Viet Cong and the Vietnamese Government—depending upon which force is present in the area at a given time.

No doubt Communist agents are present in Cham villages, and their appeals are probably similar to those used with other unassimilated groups in the country.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Word-of-mouth communication is the principal means of dissemination of information in Cham areas. The literacy level of the Cham is quite low, although information on the exact number of literates is unavailable.

Music provides the major source of entertainment among the Cham; they enjoy playing instruments and singing in unison.[1] Thus, music would be a possible means of gathering the Cham for a propaganda session.

It is also reported that the Cham are greatly intrigued by magic. One source claims that feats of magic have been known to gain more prestige for an outsider in a Cham village than the imposition of his will by authority or force.[2] Simple magic shows may be a means of gaining the respect of the Cham as well as being a way to attract them to meetings.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any civic action undertaken should include, in the planning stage, particular consideration of Cham religious and social beliefs and superstitions. In addition to specific social and cultural factors that must be considered in the development of civic action programs, it is important that the Cham be psychologically prepared to accept the proposed changes. At least initially, this will require detailed consultation with village leaders, careful assurance of results, and a relatively slow pace in implementing programs.

The following civic action guidelines may be useful in the planning and implementation of projects or programs.

1. Projects originating in the local village are more desirable than suggestions imposed by a remote Central Government or outsiders.
2. Projects should be designed to be challenging but should not be on such a scale as to intimidate the villagers by size or strangeness.
3. Projects should have fairly short completion dates or should have phases that provide frequent opportunities to evaluate effectiveness.
4. Results should, as far as possible, be observable, measurable, or tangible.
5. Ideally, projects should lend themselves to emulation by other villages or groups.

Civic Action Projects

The civic action possibilities for working with the Cham encompass everything from suggestions to lessen the difficulties of day-to-day routine to sophisticated assistance for economic development or the provision of modern political and administrative institutions. Usually, however, civic action programs will fall somewhere between these two extremes. Examples of possible projects are listed below. They should be considered representative but not all-inclusive, and they are not listed in order of priority.

1. Agriculture and natural resources
    a. Improvement of livestock, rice, and vegetable production.

   - b. Insect and rodent control.
   - c. Improvement of marketing system.
   - d. Construction of simple irrigation and drainage systems.
   - e. Clearing areas for increased cultivation.

2. Industry and communication
   - a. Roadbuilding.
   - b. Installation, operation, and maintenance of telephone, telegraph, and radio systems.
   - c. Construction of housing facilities and buildings.
   - d. Installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power generators and village electric light systems.

3. Health and sanitation
   - a. Improve sanitary standards.
   - b. Organize dispensary facilities for outpatient treatment or for first aid.
   - c. Provide safe water supply systems.
   - d. Eradicate malaria and other insect-borne diseases.
   - e. Teach sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.

4. Education
   - a. Organize basic schools for reading and writing.
   - b. Provide basic citizenship education.
   - c. Organize vocational training programs.
   - d. Provide language instruction in Vietnamese and English.
   - e. Provide information about the outside world of interest to the Cham.

5. Public administration
   - a. Provide guidance to local administrators and officials.
   - b. Aid in the organization of public services, such as agricultural extension services and medical and educational programs, operated by the Vietnamese Government.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

There is very little information pertinent to the paramilitary capabilities of the Cham. During the French Indochina War, the Cham did fight with the French against the Viet Minh. Experience during that war indicated that only a few Cham officials, guided by French and Vietnamese administrative authorities, were necessary to rally the rest of the Cham population to fight the Viet Minh.[1] It is not known at this writing whether the Cham would actually respond in this way in the current struggle with the Viet Cong.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE CHAM

The family ties and religious beliefs influence every action the Cham take. A person from a culture where actions have few religious and cultural implications must be careful not to be misled into thinking the Cham will react as the outsider does.

A few suggestions for personnel dealing with the Cham are listed below.

Official Activities

1. Initial contact with a Cham village should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the village chief, who will then introduce the visitor to other principal village figures.
2. Frankness, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Cham. In this respect, promises and predictions should not be made unless the result is assured. The Cham usually consider new groups of personnel obligated to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
3. The confidence of the Cham is not gained quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity.
4. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience should be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.
5. Projects or operations which give the Cham the impression they are being forced to change their ways should be avoided whenever possible.
6. Personnel should not be surprised if the Cham use unexpected means to achieve a given goal. It is the end result that counts.
7. Projects and operations should be kept simple. The attention of supervisory personnel should be focused on a few manageable projects at a time.
8. Every effort should be made to elevate the local leaders in the eyes of the Cham. The local chief and his assistants should receive major credit for projects and for improved adminis-

tration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Cham should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. A gift or an invitation to a ceremony or to enter a Cham house may be refused by an outsider, as long as consistency and impartiality are shown.
3. Outsiders wishing to attend a Cham ceremony, festival, or meeting should request permission from the village chief or other persons responsible for organizing the affair.
4. An outsider should never enter a Cham house unless accompanied by a member of that house. As in other cultures, this is a question of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house, unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
5. Outsiders should not get involved with Cham women. This could negate attempts to create trust and good will.

Health and Welfare

1. The Cham are becoming aware of the benefits of medical care and will request medical assistance. Outside groups in Cham areas should try to provide medical assistance whenever possible.
2. Medical teams should be prepared to handle and should have adequate supplies for extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, venereal diseases, intestinal parasites, and various skin diseases.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Etienne Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leur religion" *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, XXIII (Paris: 1891), p. 187.
2. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 245.
3. Tran-Van-Trai, *La Famille patriarcale annamite* (Paris: P. Lapagesse, 1942), p. 120.
4. Antoine Cabaton, *Nouvelles recherches sur les Chams*, translated by Basil Guy, Human Relations Area Files, New Haven, 1955 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901), p. 245.
5. André Leroi-Gourhan, and Jean Poirier, *Ethnology of Indochina* (JPRS: 13652) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, May 4, 1962), p. 115; Alan Houghton Brodrick, *Little China: The Annamese Lands* (Human Relations Area Files, Viet Nam, Source No. 25) (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 263; Henri Baudesson, *Indochina and Its Primitive Peoples*, translated by E. Appleby Holt (London: Hutchinson, 1919), p. 226.
6. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 245, cite this figure from NNCDT (Nhom Nghien Cuu Dan Toc [Cua Uy-Ban Dan Toc]), [Minority Peoples' Study Group (of the Committee of Minority Peoples)], 1959.

   Other population estimates found:

   40,000 — Gerald C. Hickey, *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964), p. 1.

   35,000—George L. Harris, *et al.*, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962), p. 61.

   30,000—Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Vietnams: A Political and Military Analysis* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 13.

   25,000—Norman R. Ziemer, "Tribes of South Vietnam," Vietnam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance [Lecture, Ban-Me-Thuot, Republic of Vietnam], August 1964.

   20,000 plus 30,000 mixed with the Vietnamese "likely to be assimilated by them shortly" Joseph Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities in the Republic of Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence*, edited by Wesley R. Fishel (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 99.
7. Col. Walter Frank Choinski, *Country Study: Republic of Vietnam* (The Military Assistance Institute, U.S. Department of

Defense) (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Research, 1964), p. 18.

8. Roger Teulières, "La Maison rurale vietnamienne," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXVI (1961), p. 672.
9. Nguyen-Thieu-Lau, "La Population cham du Sud-Annam s'accroît-elle?" *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* VI (Hanoi: 1944), pp. 221–23.
10. Compiled from information provided on several maps including: LeBar, *et al., op. cit.,* map of "Ethnolinguistic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia"; U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of Viet Nam* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition, 1965); Ethnologic map prepared in 1964 under the direction of Corps Engineer XVII Airborne Corps by the 66th Engineering Company (Topo) (Corps) from Cambodia and Republic of Vietnam with overprint data furnished by U.S. Army, John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare; and Buttinger, *op. cit.,* p. 98.
11. Buttinger, *op. cit.,* p. 98.
12. ". . . the Cham are still there (in hill country): if they seem to have been completely absorbed in Quang Nam, they still remain in Phu Yen. There are twenty-one Cham hamlets in the huyen (district) of Don Xuyan, and fifteen in the huyen of Son Hoa, both mountain circonscriptions (e.g., administrative divisions)," Pierre Gourou, *L'Utilisation du sol en Indochine française* (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945), pp. 132–33.
13. Teulières, *op. cit.,* p. 672.
14. Victor Forbin, "Les Civilisations éteintes en Idochine: Les Chams," *La Nature,* LIX, 2867 (1931), p. 340.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Bernard Philippe Groslier, *Indochine: Carrefour des arts* (Paris: A. Michel, 1961), pp. 26–27.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 27.
3. Cabaton, *op. cit.,* pp. 77–78.
4. Jeanne Leuba, *Un Royaume disparu: Les Chams et leur art* (Paris: G. Van Oest, 1923), p. 91.
5. Brodrick, *op. cit.,* pp. 269–70.
6. M. Ner, "Les Musulmans de l'Indochine française," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XLI (1941), p. 156.
7. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 69.
8. LeBar, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 245.
9. Choinski, *op. cit.,* p. 18, and Leuba, *op. cit.,* p. 93.
10. Leuba, *op. cit.,* p. 91.
11. Georges Coèdes, *Les États hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1948), pp. 79–81.
12. Hickey, *op. cit.,* p. 18.
13. Olav Robert Thure Janse, *The Peoples of French Indochina,* Smithsonian War Background Series, No. 19 (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1944), p. 26; U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Psychological Warfare Country Plan for Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Human Relations Area Files, 1954), p. 9.

14. These warriors, a mixture of local tribesmen and Hindu immigrants, were described as both highly civilized and extremely prosperous. [Gabrielle M. Vassal, *On and Off Duty in Annan* (London: William Heinemman, 1910), p. 180.] The Cham, already relatively civilized, had voluntarily espoused the art, customs, and religious practices of the Indian traders and missionaries as early as the first century, A. D. [Groslier, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–51]. By the second century, the Cham practiced Buddhism and at times combined it with Hinduism [LeBar, *op. cit.*, p. 245].
15. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
16. Joseph Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), p. 260.
17. Louis Malleret, *Ethnic Groups of French Indochina* (JPRS: 12359) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, February 7, 1962), p. 12.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
19. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Tran-Van-Trai, *op. cit.*, p. 120; Wilfred G. Burchett, *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 118.
20. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
21. Ner, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–94.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 157 ff.
23. U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
24. Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes], "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie* (Special Number, Spring 1950) pp. 952–53.
25. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
26. Dates and information compiled from: Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 205; Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 151; Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–35; Dam Bo, *op. cit.*, p. 952; Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 18; and Vassal, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
27. Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
28. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
29. Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 264, and Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 238–39.
30. Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 107–108.
31. Teulières, *op. cit.*, pp. 671–72.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
3. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
4. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
5. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 99; Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
7. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
10. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
11. M. Georges Maspéro, *The Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS: 13443) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962), p. 25.
12. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
13. Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

14. Alexander C. Hanna, "The Chams of French Indochina," *Moslem World*, XXI (1931), p. 270.
15. Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
16. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
18. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
19. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
22. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 222–23.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Choinski, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
2. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
3. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
4. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–20. No other sources consulted substantiated this theory on the clan system of the Cham. Olav Janse in *Peoples of French Indochina*, states: "The Cham are divided into various clans named after plants, animals or objects" (e.g., clan of the Bamboo, of the Road, of the Rhinoceros, etc.), p. 26.
5. Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
6. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
7. Perhaps as a result of Vietnamese influence, in Parik (Phan Ri) and Karang (Phan Rang) the boy may ask the girl in marriage [Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 247].
8. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
9. Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–86.
10. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
11. Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 186–88, and Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 254–56. Variations of these customs are reported.
12. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
13. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 248–49.
14. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
15. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 210–11. In some cases the wife must pay the husband even when she institutes the divorce [Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 24.]
16. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
17. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 258–59.
18. Choinski, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
19. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
20. Ner, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–58.
21. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–50.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 252–53.
23. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 267–69. See Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 57–60 for descriptions of the *Throak* or *Dih Crvak* and *Dayop* ceremonies.
24. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 289–90.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 290–91.
26. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
27. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
28. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
29. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 310–11.
30. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 261–62.

31. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62.
32. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
33. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 313.
34. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
35. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 314.
36. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
37. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
38. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 265. There are known variations on this procedure (Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 314; and Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–64).
39. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 267.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 214–15; Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
41. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 86–87.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
4. The wealthy women of Phan Rang wear silver or gold buttons in their ears [Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 230].
5. Bracelets are worn by some girls as an ornament to remind them of the temporary vow of chastity taken to ward off danger or cure an illness [Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 230].
6. Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
7. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
8. Teulières, *op. cit.*, p. 672.
9. Choinski, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
10. Teulières, *op. cit.*, p. 672.
11. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
12. Teulières, *op. cit.*, p. 672.
13. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
15. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
16. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 232–33, 262–63.
17. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
19. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 274.
20. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 51.
22. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–30.
23. These offerings may cost anything from a chicken to a buffalo, and for a collective sacrifice, even four or five buffaloes, which explains why the Cham, who spend two-thirds of their income on ritual, are forever in debt [Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 28].
24. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 297.
25. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
26. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 297–98.
27. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
28. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–61 and Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 274–75.
29. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–31.
30. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 269–72.
31. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–37.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 237 and Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

VI. RELIGION

1. Vassal, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
2. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
4. Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
5. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.
8. Vassal, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
9. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
10. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–17 and Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 319–22.
11. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 215–18. Some sources exclude Po Rome and Po-Klong-Garai from the list entirely replacing them with the Po-Yan-Moh creator of all things and the censor of the gods. He shares powers with Allah to assume any form he wishes so as to avoid recognition. This god's name when reconstructed becomes Mahadeva, another name for Siva [Cabaton, pp. 28–29]. Aymonier claims that no cult venerates this god and that his name occurs only in local literature. One text attributes to him the creation of the marine conch, and the souls of animals [Aymonier, p. 219].
12. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–36.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–23.
14. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 224. The Spirit of God is said to live in the brain of the Basaih. To prevent its escape the turban is wound very tightly about the head.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 223–24.
17. Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
19. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 224–25.
20. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–41.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 39, 51.
22. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–26.
23. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 53–57.
24. According to Aymonier, this ceremony occurs in the seventh month, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
25. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
26. Aymonier claims these fetes are celebrated in the temples of the three divinities and especially in that of Po Rome, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
27. Cabaton, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.
28. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
29. Ner, *op. cit.*, pp. 154–55.
30. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 247 and Cabaton, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
31. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
32. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, p. 267.
33. Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–41.
34. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 283–84.
35. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 267–68.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
37. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
38. Baudesson, *op. cit.*, pp. 305–308 and Aymonier, *op. cit.*, pp. 291–94.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
2. Robequain, *op. cit.*, pp. 80–81.
3. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–119.
6. Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
7. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–21.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
10. Ner, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
2. Leuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–198.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 198–199.
4. Aymonier, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Leuba, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
2. Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Maj. A. M. Savani, *Visage et images du Sud Viet-Nam* (Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre-Mer, 1955), p. 154.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE CHAM

No footnotes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aymonier, Etienne. "Les Tchames et leur religion," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, XXIII (Paris: 1891), 187–237, 261–98.

Baudesson, Henri. *Indochina and Its Primitive Peoples.* Translated by E. Appleby Holt. London: Hutchinson, 1919.

Benedict, Paul K. "Languages and Literatures of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, VI, 4 (August 1947), 379–89.

———. "Thai, Kadai, and Indonesian: A New Alignment in Southeastern Asia," *American Anthropologist*, IV, Part I (October-December 1942), 576–601.

Biasutti, Renato. *Le Razze e i popoli della terra:* Europa-Asia, Vol. II. Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1959.

Brodrick, Alan Houghton. *Little China: The Annamese Lands* (Human Relations Area Files, Viet Nam, Source No. 25.) London: Oxford University Press, 1942.

Burchett, Wilfred G. *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1963.

Buttinger, Joseph. "Ethnic Minorities in the Republic of Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* Edited by Wesley R. Fishel. New York; Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, 98–121.

———. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Cabaton, Antoine. *Nouvelles recherches sur les Chams.* Translated by Basil Guy, Human Relations Area Files, New Haven, 1955. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901.

Cadière, L., *et al.* *Vietnamese Ethnographic Papers.* Behavior Science Translations. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1953.

Canada. Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Geographical Branch, Institute of Pacific Relations. *Indochina: A Geographical Appreciation.* Foreign Geography Information Series, No. 6. Ottawa: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953.

Carver, George A., Jr. "The Real Revolution in South Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs*, XLIII (April 1965), 387–408.

Choinski, Col. Walter Frank. *Country Study: Republic of Vietnam.* The Military Assistance Institute, U.S. Department of Defense. Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Research, 1964.

Coedès, Georges. *Les États hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie.* Paris: E. de Boccard, 1948.

Cortambert, E., and de Rosmy, Leon. *Tableau de la Cochin Chine.* Paris: Armand Le Chevalier, 1862.

Dam Bo [Jacques Dournes]. "Les Populations montagnardes du Sud-Indochinois," *France-Asie*, Special Number, Spring 1950.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Fall, Bernard B. "Recent Publications on Indochina," *Pacific Affairs*, XXIX (March 1956).

———. *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963.

———. "Viet-Nam: Mosaic of Minorities," *The Washington Post*, May 16, 1965, E–4.

Farinaud, M. E. "Nouvelles recherches sur la distribution des groupes sanguins parmi les populations de l'Indochine méridionale: Les 'Mois' du Darlac et les Chams," *Comptes Rendus des Séances et Mémoires de la Société de Biologie et de ses Filiales et Associées.* (1939), 1238–40.

Fishel, Wesley R. (ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Forbin, Victor. "Les Civilisations éteintes en Indochine: Les Chams," *La Nature*, LIX, 2867 (1931), 337–41.

Garrigues, E. "Rapport sur le fonction nement de la justice en Cochin Chine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, V (1930), 217–57.

Gourou, Pierre. *L'Utilisation du sol en Indochine française.* Washington, D.C.: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945.

Groslier, Bernard Philippe. "Histoire et ethnologie en Indochine." *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVII, New Series (1952), 332–42.

———. *Indochine: Carrefour des arts.* Paris: A. Michel, 1961.

Hanna, Alexander C. "The Chams of French Indochina," *Moslem World*, XXI (1931), 263–81.

Harris, George L., *et al. U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Hickey, Gerald C. *The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.* Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, April 1964.

Janse, Olav Robert Thure. *The Peoples of French Indochina*, Smithsonian War Background Series, No. 19. Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1944.

Langrand, Gustave. *Vie sociale et religieuse en Annam: Monographie d'un village de la côte Sud-Annum.* Lille: Univers, 1945.

Lasker, Bruno. *Books on Southeast Asia: A Select Bibliography.* New York: American Institute of Pacific Relations, 1956.

———. *Peoples of Southeast Asia.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al. Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Leroi-Gourhan, André, and Poirier, Jean. *Ethnology of Indochina* (JPRS: 13652). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, May 4, 1962.

Leuba, Jeanne. *Un Royaume disparu: Les Chams et leur art.* Paris: G. Van Oest, 1923.

Lewis, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indochina.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

Malleret, Louis. *Ethnic Groups of French Indochina* (JPRS: 12359). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, February 7, 1962.

———. "La Minorité cambodgienne de Cochinchine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises* (1946), 19–34.

Maspéro, M. Georges. *Un Empire colonial français, l'Indochine.* Paris: G. Van Oest, 1929.

———. *Le Royaume de Champa.* Paris: G. Van Oest, 1928.

———. *The Montagnard Tribes of South Vietnam* (JPRS: 13443). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, April 13, 1962.

Mus, Paul. Vietnam: *Sociologie d'une guerre.* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952.

Ner, M. "Les Musulmans de l'Indochine française," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLI (1941), 151–200.

Nguyen-Thieu-Lau. "La Population cham du Sud-Annam s'accroît-elle? *Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme,* VI (Hanoi: 1944), 213–23.

Robequain, Charles. *The Economic Development of French Indo-china:* Translated by Isabel A. Ward. Issued under the auspices of the International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations. London: Oxford University Press, 1944.

———. *L'Indochine française.* Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1935.

Savani, Maj. A. M. *Visage et images du Sud Viet-Nam.* Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre-Mer, 1953.

Teulières, Roger. "La Maison rurale vietnamienne," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXXVI (1961), 661–79.

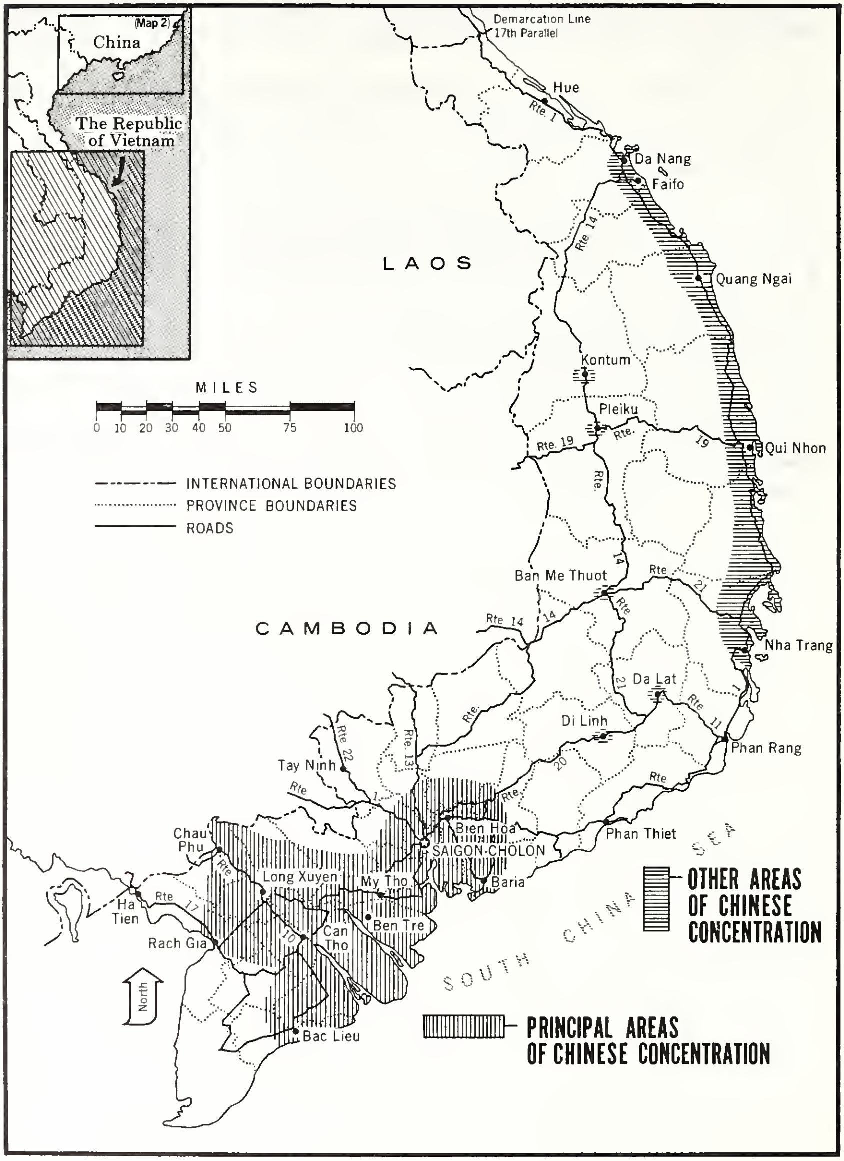
Tran-Van-Trai. *La Famille patriarcale annamite.* Paris: P. Lapagesse, 1942.

U.S. Army Special Warfare School. *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of Viet Nam.* Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, revised edition 1965.

U.S. Department of the Army. *Army Psychological Warfare Country Plan for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Human Relations Area Files, 1954.

Vassal, Gabrielle M. *On and Off Duty in Annam.* London: William Heinemann, 1910.

Ziemer, Norman R. "Tribes of South Vietnam," Vietnam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance [Lecture, Ban Me Thuot, Republic of Vietnam], August 1964.


(Map 2)
China
The Republic of Vietnam
Demarcation Line
17th Parallel
Hue
Rte. 1
Da Nang
Faifo
Rte 14
LAOS
Quang Ngai
Kontum
Pleiku
Rte. 19
Rte.
19
Qui Nhon
Rte.
14
MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50 75 100
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
Ban Me Thuot
Rte
21
Rte
CAMBODIA
Rte 14
14
Nha Trang
Da Lat
21
Rte 11
1
Rte.
Di Linh
Phan Rang
20
Rte
Rte 22
Rte. 13
Tay Ninh
Rte
1
Rte
Bien Hoa
SAIGON-CHOLON
Phan Thiet
Chau Phu
Rte
Long Xuyen
My Tho
Baria
Ha Tien
Rte
17
Can Tho
Ben Tre
Rach Gia
10
North
Bac Lieu
SOUTH CHINA SEA
OTHER AREAS OF CHINESE CONCENTRATION
PRINCIPAL AREAS OF CHINESE CONCENTRATION

The Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam

CHAPTER 22. THE CHINESE

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam number between 500,000 and 1,200,000 and are scattered throughout the country, the largest concentration being in Saigon-Cholon. Their presence, since at least the third century B.C., has had a profound effect on virtually all aspects of Vietnamese culture. Although for centuries the Chinese intermarried with both Vietnamese and Cambodians, achieving some degree of assimilation in the process, in recent years the practice of intermarriage may have declined. In any case, assimilation has been retarded, to a certain extent, by Government decrees, designed to promote Chinese acculturation.

During the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem, other decrees were formulated to break the Chinese stranglehold on the economy. Then, as now, the Chinese were engaged in practically every field of the economy, completely controlling some businesses, such as the rice trade. Because their mercantile interests have taken the Chinese into remote rural areas to serve as shopkeeper-middlemen and as agents, they have established close contacts with the populace.

The religion of the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam is a synthesis of ancestor worship, animism, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and, in some cases, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Folk beliefs play an important role in the Chinese religion as well as in all other aspects of Chinese culture.

Religion, especially Confucianism, is closely correlated with the family. The Chinese family, the most powerful Chinese social unit, is generally patriarchal, descent is patrilineal, and residence, patrilocal. Women have traditionally held a decidedly inferior position, being barred from many activities and generally confined to the home.

To integrate the Chinese community into the Vietnamese body politic, in 1960 the Diem regime officially abolished the five congregations or mutual aid societies which had hitherto provided the Chinese with educational, medical, and legal services and which had been responsible for the actions of each Chinese immigrant. In addition, the Government decreed that Vietnamese would thereafter replace Chinese as the language of instruction in Chinese schools, and all Chinese born in the Republic of Vietnam would be required to become Vietnamese citizens.

Name of Group

The overseas Chinese are known by a variety of general names, such as: Hua Ch'iao—Chinese living abroad; Nanyang—literally, the "countries of the South Seas"; and Tun-Nanya—Chinese residing in Southeast Asia.[1] More specifically, the Chinese in Vietnam are simply called Chinese, with the exception of those known as Minh Huong (literally the "perfume of the Minhs" or supporters of the Ming dynasty). Formerly referring to all Chinese, the term Minh Huong is now applied only to the offspring of Sino-Vietnamese marriages, who are also known by the broader term *métis*, meaning halfbreed.

Size of Group

As noted, population estimates for the Chinese residing in the Republic of Vietnam range between 500,000 and 1,200,000.[2] The large discrepancy between these figures is explained by the absence of clearly defined criteria for determining who is actually Chinese. The terms "legal" and "ethnic" recur in discussions on the Chinese, but, in quoting population estimates, few statisticians indicate to which group they are referring. Legal Chinese are presumably those who have registered as citizens of Vietnam. It is more difficult to determine who are the ethnic Chinese. Is a person Chinese if born of two Chinese parents in Vietnam, of one Chinese parent in Vietnam, of Chinese parents in China but currently residing in Vietnam, or if Chinese is still spoken in the home?

This problem was presumably resolved by Ordinance Number 48 of August 21, 1956, which stated that all Chinese born in Vietnam of at least one parent also born in Vietnam were to be considered Vietnamese and were to become Vietnamese citizens.[3] But as of the "final" deadline for taking out Vietnamese citizenship papers (August 10, 1957) less than 80,000 to 100,000 persons of Chinese origin had completed the formalities. Most of the Chinese disliked this decree, since it denied them the option of returning to their homeland and forced them to adopt citizenship.[4] Obviously, the number of legal Chinese therefore represents only a small segment of the total population of Chinese ancestry. In addition, it is impossible to determine the number of Chinese who have become Vietnamized or acculturated over the past two thousand years, especially as many have adopted Vietnamese names and live with the Vietnamese outside the Chinese communities.

The Chinese population in the Republic of Vietnam, as in almost all the countries of Southeast Asia, is divided into dialect groups; those originating from the same province of China and speaking the same dialect generally belong to the same group. The Chinese, naturally gregarious and accustomed to belonging to various groups—family, class, etc.—in their homeland, formed mutual aid societies or charitable organizations, based on dialect divisions, to safeguard the interests of the individual members. These associations—named *bangs* by Emperor Gia Long in 1814, although originally known by the French as congregations and later as Chinese Regional Administrative Groups—comprised individuals originating from five provinces of China: Canton, Teochiu, Hakka, Fukien, and Hainan. In 1950 one source estimated that the Chinese belonging to these dialect associations in Vietnam numbered: Cantonese, 337,500; Teochiu, 225,000; Hakka, 75,000; Fukinese, 60,000; and Hainanese, 30,000.[5] (These figures include the Chinese in what is now North Vietnam.)

No demographic study of the Chinese population in Vietnam is complete without a discussion of the Minh Huong and Sino-Cambodians, especially as their legal status has always been a matter of controversy. Because many of the early male Chinese immigrants arrived unmarried, planning to settle in the country permanently, they frequently took Vietnamese wives. At first the offspring of these marriages were considered Chinese and were permitted to join their father's bang. However, as the number of halfbreeds steadily increased, the Vietnamese Government decreed these Minh Huong to be Vietnamese rather than Chinese. To assimilate the halfbreeds into Vietnamese society, the Government required them to adopt Vietnamese dress, took them out of their father's bang, and placed them in their own group or in a special association called Minh Huong Xa (village of Minh Huong).

The Minh Huong Xa were each led by a president who served as an intermediary between the group and the Government. The Minh Huong Xa were not territorial subdivisions, but merely administrative terms used to distinguish them from the Chinese bangs. Special tax provisions were accorded to these groups.

The French abolished the Minh Huong Xa in Cochin China in 1862 and thenceforth prohibited these individuals from forming groups distinguishable from the Vietnamese, for they were to be assimilated with the Vietnamese.[6] The largest number of Minh Huong were found in the area formerly known as the French Protectorate of Cochin China, where immigration was most intense. The Minh Huong population is presumably not included in the statistics relating to the pure Chinese. Early estimates of the number of Minh Huong living in Cochin China are: 64,500 in 1921; 73,000 in 1931; and 80,000 in 1944.[7]

Little information is available concerning the Sino-Cambodian métis (halfbreeds). The Cambodians and the Vietnamese, however, are known to esteem Chinese men as mates for their daughters; they consider the Chinese industrious, thrifty, and of superior intelligence.[8] In 1936 the number of Sino-Cambodians residing in Cochin China was estimated, by one source, at over 100,000.[9]

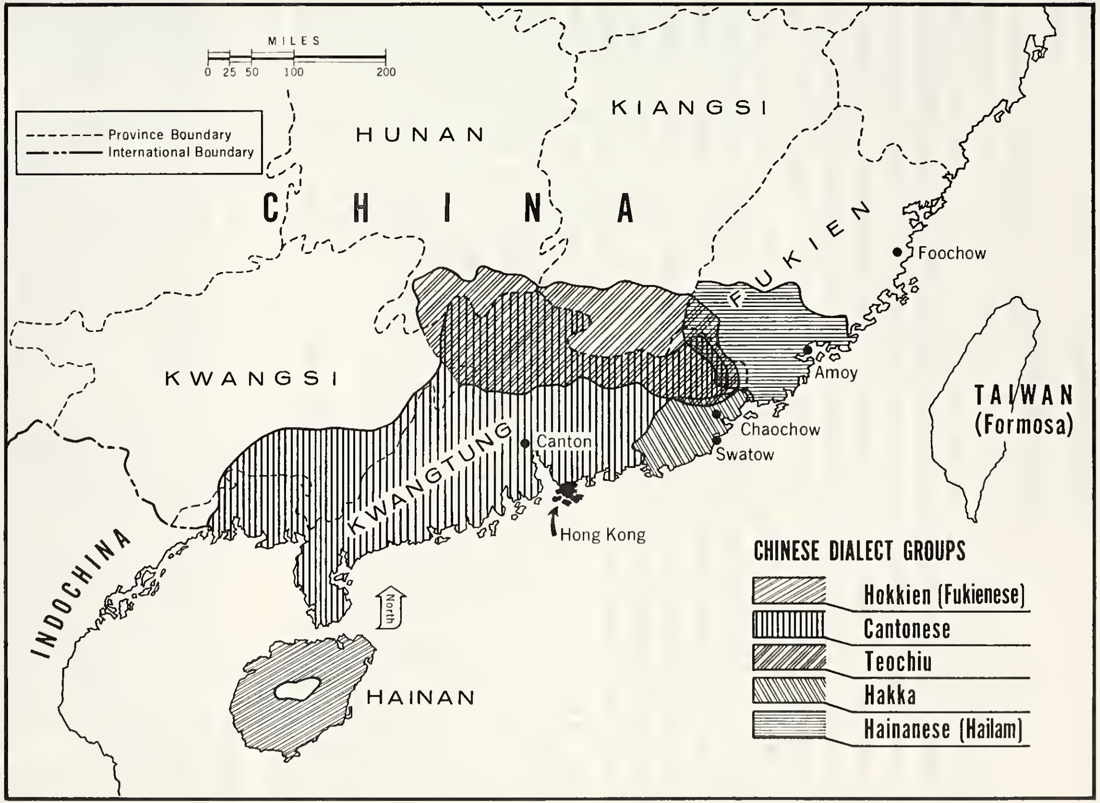
Another source claimed in 1961 that out of the total population of the Republic of Vietnam (14,000,000), the Chinese métis (both Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Cambodian) numbered 150,000.[10]

Location of Group

With the exception of the Hakka and the Hainanese, who engage in agricultural pursuits throughout the country, most Chinese reside in urban areas where they engage in trade and commerce.[11] Approximately 95 percent of the Chinese live in the area formerly known as Cochin China.[12] In the Republic of Vietnam, the twin cities of Saigon-Cholon contain the largest concentration of Chinese, having, in 1957, a joint population of about 570,000 Chinese.[13] Outside of Singapore, Cholon has the largest overseas Chinese population in Southeast Asia. Several other towns of the Republic of Vietnam boasting a sizeable number of Chinese are Da Nang, Khanh Hung (Soc Trang), Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh, My Tho, Can Tho, Rach Gia, Sa Dec, and Ha Tien.

In addition, smaller groups of Chinese have been reported in all the lowland provinces. Even the smallest villages usually have a Chinese shopkeeper or agent and sometimes a Chinese doctor.[14]

Although one source claims that the Chinese live in separate communities,[15] it is generally reported that they live in close proximity to the Vietnamese in both urban and rural areas. Although they group themselves culturally, the Chinese participate in many of the same businesses and recreational activities as do the Vietnamese. Intermarriage between the Chinese and Vietnamese has been frequent.[16]


MILES
0
25
50
100
200
Province Boundary
International Boundary
HUNAN
KIANGSI
CHINA
FUKIEN
Foochow
KWANGSI
Amoy
TAIWAN (Formosa)
Chaochow
Canton
Swatow
KWANGTUNG
Hong Kong
INDOCHINA
North
HAINAN
CHINESE DIALECT GROUPS
Hokkien (Fukienese)
Cantonese
Teochiu
Hakka
Hainanese (Hailam)

Principal Places of Origin of the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam

SECTION II

BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Origin

Nearly all overseas Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam emigrated from southern China; more specifically, from three provinces, Kwangtung, Kwangsi and Fukien.[1] The Cantonese (in Chinese, "Kwang-fu") came from the southern and southeastern regions of Kwangtung and Kwangsi Provinces, particularly from the vicinity of Kwang-chou, Foshan, Wu-chou, as well as Hong Kong and Macao.[2] The Fukienese (Hokkien) originated in the southern part of Fukien Province, especially from the vicinity of Amoy.[3] Most Hainanese (Hailam) came from one of the centers of the western district of Wenching on the island of Hainan. The Teochiu emigrated from Trieu-chau district in northern Kwangtung Province, notably from Ch-ao-chou (or Chaochow) and Swatow. (The Teochiu are sometimes called the Swatow people.[4]) The origin of the Hakkas (in Chinese "K'o-chia") is a matter of controversy. Some sources state that the Hakkas came from the eastern area of Kwangtung Province in the region of Mei Hsien.[5] Their traditions seem to place their origin in the far northeast, although some sources claim that Hakkas emigrated from Honan between the fourth and ninth centuries.[6]

The precise origin of the Chinese race as a whole is still undetermined.[7]

Language

Chinese and its various dialects belong to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. The term dialect, although commonly used to designate these speech groups, is erroneous; the groups actually speak distinct languages each containing several dialects. The Chinese dialects of the coastal provinces of southern China, like those spoken in the Republic of Vietnam differ considerably from northern or Mandarin Chinese. According to some linguists, these dialects differ as much from one another as from the standard language and are, in fact, mutually unintelligible.[8] Other linguists claim the differences between the dialects and variants of the same dialect have been greatly exaggerated.[9] In any case, each speech group includes subdivisions comparable to regional differences.

At the close of World War II, the Chinese population in the Republic of Vietnam was divided in terms of dialects as follows: 45 percent or 450,000 spoke Cantonese; 8 percent or 75,000 spoke Hakka; 25 percent or 225,000 spoke Teochiu; and the rest spoke Hokkien or Hainanese.[10] Since the last two dialects are frequently grouped together in the Fukien group, the ensuing discussion will concern three large dialect groups: Cantonese, Hakka, and Fukienese.

As the language of commerce, Cantonese has become the most important of the southern forms of Chinese; it is the principal language spoken in commercial centers such as Hong Kong, Canton, Fatshan, Macao, and Cholon. Futhermore, Cantonese is believed to be the oldest established form of Chinese, best preserving the essential traits of ancient Chinese in the southern provinces, for it has developed independently of the northern language since at least the 10th century. Retaining not only the full range of eight tones of ancient Chinese, Cantonese has also added a ninth by subdividing one of the others. Thus for every word there are nine tones, with the meaning of each word depending on the tone. Cantonese diverges from northern Chinese chiefly by preserving an older phase of the language, whereas its few independent innovations are in the matter of tones and vocalism.

Hakka is the second most widespread dialect of Kwangtung Province. In rural regions of China the Cantonese and Hakkas occupy separate villages in the same area; in urban districts Hakka gives way to Cantonese, bilinguals being mainly Hakkas. Since Hakka is not a language of commerce, few people feel they need to learn it.[11] Hakka has affinities with both northern Chinese and Cantonese. Like Cantonese, Hakka is more archaic than northern Chinese, but less so than is Cantonese. In contrast with Cantonese, which retains at least one distinct tone corresponding to each of the ancient tones, Hakka has combined several tones.[12]

For this discussion the Fukien group may be said to include the Hainanese (Hailam) speakers, since both have a common origin in an old stratum of Chinese spoken in Fukien Province. Fukienese dialects are characterized by a vocabulary peculiar to themselves. Several varieties of Fukien are spoken in the southern portion of Fukien Province; among these, Amoy, Swatow, and Ch-ao-chou. A double pronunciation of the vocabulary characterizes this group. Literary forms used in reading are gradually spreading into the colloquial languages and, in so doing, generally acquire slightly different meanings.[13]

The Hainanese dialects apparently originated in southern Fukien Province (as shown by their basis in the old dialect) and were imported by immigrants who settled the island in the distant past.

Since their arrival the Hainanese dialects have evolved independently, each developing certain peculiarities of its own.

The differences between Fukienese variants are apparently considerable; for, according to one source, the regional dialect of one valley is unintelligible to inhabitants of a neighboring valley speaking a different dialect. Since the rural variants are mutually unintelligible, logically the speech of the urban educated is even less comprehensible to the rural peasant.

The written Chinese language, using the ideographic script, whereby characters represent an idea or a group of ideas, rather than single words, is uniform for all Chinese dialects.[14] The Westerner finds it extremely difficult to learn this elaborate ideographic script, for it is based on a concept totally different from that of his own writing. While the Westerner expresses everything in abstract terms, the Chinese depicts his ideas in concrete fashion.

Legendary History

Like many other civilizations, the Chinese have an abundance of myths and legends to trace the origin of their race. Much of this lore is important not only because a number of the mythical heroes have passed from legend into history, but also because some of the same stories figure prominently in Chinese literature, mythology, and religion. Some personages and the inventions or actions attributed to them may have a basis in fact, others appear to be completely mythical.[15] A number of these personalities appear and reappear in Chinese histories. One example is the Yellow Emperor, also known as Huang Ti, who was an outstanding figure in Taoism; Chinese chronology is said by some to have started with his accession to the throne. Among other things, he fought successfully against the barbarians, initiated official historiography, corrected the calendar by adding an intercalary month, and inaugurated the chronological system of reckoning by 60-year cycles.

Many other personalities appear to be strictly mythical. For example, P'an Ku is credited with separating the heavens and the earth, forming the moon, the sun, plants, and animals. Vu Ch'ao taught men the art of construction. Sui Jên invented fire making by boring one piece of wood with another. Fu Hsi taught men to fish with nets and to raise domestic animals; he invented musical instruments, pictograms and ideograms—the basis of the present system of writing—and the eight trigrams or Pa Kua used in divination. To Nü Kua devised the marriage regulations. Shen Nung, the "Divine Husbandman," was the father of agriculture and medicine. Shun, a later Emperor, standardized measures of length, capacity, and weight and divided the empire into 12 provinces. Yu, Shun's successor, founded the first dynasty, Hsia, and made the crown hereditary in his family.

Chinese beliefs in certain mythical creatures date from early historical times or perhaps even from prehistory. These creatures are of recognizable appearance, attend or foretell certain events, and are, at times, objects of worship. The *hung* or dragon is an amiable creature associated with *yang*,* rain, clouds, and water. The *lung wang* or dragon king is worshiped in special temples. The *feng-huang* (feng being the male and huang the female) resembles the English phoenix with "the head of a hen, the eye of a man, the neck of a serpent, the viscera of a locust, the brow of a swallow, the back of a tortoise, and a tail like that of a fish but with twelve feathers."[16] In the past, the feng-huang appeared to presage a political event. The *ch'i-i-lin* (ch'i being the male and lin the female), also a mixture of several creatures, has a single horn and resembles the English unicorn. It is a benevolent creature and, with the feng-huang, is believed to affect pregnancy and birth.[17]

Factual History

It is virtually impossible to determine exactly when the Chinese first entered Vietnam. By the third century B.C., the country was brought into the "orbit of imperial Chinese military and naval power and [was subjected] to the administrative system of the mandarinate."[18] Chinese colonists—merchants and artisans—are believed to have begun settling in the country in the third century B.C. In 207 or 208 B.C., a Chinese general declared himself King of Nam Viet (Southern Land).

Although there had been river trade between China and Vietnam for some time, regular trade relations between the two countries were established in the second century B.C. Considerable cultural interchange took place; the Vietnamese-adopted the Chinese language and script as the official language and script, greatly influencing the development of the Vietnamese language. During this time the Vietnamese also acquired from the Chinese certain agricultural implements and working animals.[19] Although the Vietnamese feared and hated their Chinese overlords, they admired their civilization and welcomed the new methods and ideas which the Chinese brought.[20]

In 111 B.C., under the Han dynasty, Nam Viet was conquered and incorporated into imperial China as the Province of Giao Chi. For over a century Vietnam remained a "leniently governed protectorate of China."[21] During that time, Chinese merchants, scholars, soldiers, and political refugees continued to leave—especially in periods of crises—their native provinces of Kwangtung, Fukien, and Kwangsi for Vietnam.[22]

Vietnamese armed revolt, led by the Trung sisters, broke out against the Chinese in 39 A.D. The sisters ruled for two years over the three Vietnamese provinces extending south to Hue, until the Chinese reconquered the provinces. Since most of the Vietnamese feudal lords had been killed in the revolt, the Chinese were able to exercise direct control over the country, with only brief interruptions, for 900 years. During the early years of the first century A.D., when China was beset with economic crises, civil war, and changing political regimes, refugee intellectuals poured into Vietnam, penetrating further down the coast.[23] Assimilation took place naturally; the immigrants, mostly male and unmarried, intermarried freely with the Vietnamese. During the first five centuries the greatest assimilation occurred among the elite of both peoples, producing a Sino-Vietnamese upper class. Although the Han dynasty collapsed in 220, the Chinese maintained their power in Vietnam. With the establishment of the T'ang dynasty in 618, Giao Chi became a Protectorate-General of China and was renamed Annam (Pacified South).

---

* See "Folk Beliefs," p. 964 for a discussion of the *yin-yang* philosophy of nature.

Until the early part of the tenth century, periodic Vietnamese revolts were instigated almost exclusively by the Sino-Vietnamese upper class. By 939, however, the lower classes had been sufficiently oppressed by the Chinese to oppose their domination; and Annam finally achieved its independence when the Annamese drove out the Chinese Army. They renamed their newly independent state Dai Co Viet (Great Viet State), although the Chinese continued to call it Annam. Even after 939, Chinese immigrants continued to pour into the independent state in large groups after major Chinese political upheavals, as well as on an individual basis.[24]

The Mongol invasions and the overthrow of the Sung dynasty in China in the 13th century caused many Sung partisans—soldiers and civilians—to emigrate and settle in the regions of Giao Chi (Tonkin), Tenchen (South Annam) and in Tchenla (Cambodia).[25]

Not until the early part of the 15th century did the Chinese regain control of Vietnam, a rule which endured for only two decades. Although the Mongols had tried three times—in the 13th century—to reconquer Vietnam, they had failed. In 1406, after defeating the Mongols, the Ming dynasty sent an army to invade Vietnam. By 1407 the country was once more under Chinese domination. Economic exploitation of the population by the Chinese encouraged the development of a strong national resistance movement.[26]

In early 1427, Le Loi, the first of the Le dynasty—the Vietnamese dynasty which ruled the country until the late 18th century—forced the Chinese armies to evacuate Vietnam. A hundred years later the country was divided between two feudal families—the Trinh in the north and the Nguyen in the south—both descendants of the first Le.[27]

The steady increase of Chinese immigrants into Vietnam during the 16th and early part of the 17th centuries led to the establishment of a Chinese commercial center in Faifo, south of Tourane (Da Nang), at the beginning of the 17th century. When the Manchus overthrew the Ming dynasty in 1644, 3,000 Ming supporters fled to Vietnam to seek refuge at the Nguyen court.[28] Realizing that he could use these refugees to colonize the Mekong Delta, the astute Nguyen emperor established them in Bien Hoa, My Tho, and Ben Tre in lower Cochin China (and subsequently at Ha Tien).[29] In 1663, the Chinese could be divided into two groups: the Minh Huong, who had married Vietnamese women, had assisted in developing the country and were settled permanently in Vietnam; and the Chinese who had emigrated under the Manchus, who were obliged to pay heavy taxes and to settle only in certain cities. The Minh Huong remained the privileged Chinese throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.[30] In 1715 a Chinese, Mac Cuu, seized possession of Ha Tien and settled there with a thousand of his compatriots.

In an uprising lasting from 1776 to 1802, the Tay Son brothers, supported by the Vietnamese merchant class as well as by the peasants, attacked the Chinese in Vietnam in an effort to break Chinese control of the economy. To help protect the Chinese who were scattered in small communities throughout the south, the Nguyen court at Hue ordered them to settle three miles from Saigon. In 1778, threatened by the advancing Tay Son rebels, the Bien Hoa Chinese fled to this area and founded the commercial center called Taignon by the Chinese and later Cholon (Great Market).[31] Four years later the rebel Tay Sons captured Saigon, destroyed the Chinese shops in Cholon, and massacred over 10,000 Chinese.[32] The Tay Son revolt was put down by Nguyen Anh, who proclaimed himself Emperor Gia Long and changed the name of the country from Dai Co Viet to Vietnam.

The 19th century saw both a causative and a quantitative change in Chinese emigration. Until then the causes of emigration from China had been primarily political—wars, uprisings, and revolts; economic factors—droughts, famines, and relative overpopulation—had been secondary. Emigration had been haphazard and fairly limited in scale, but after the Opium War (1839–1842) it became a permanent phenomenon. The new era of increased capitalism reflected by the importation of foreign manufactured goods into China ruined Chinese industry, which had always depended on manual labor. Importation of agricultural goods also had a devastating effect upon the Chinese economy; millions of farmers were forced to move to the cities to seek a livelihood. Since industry was still underdeveloped, these rural inhabitants could not be accommodated in the cities; they were forced either to starve or to emigrate.

The plight of the Chinese emigrant was ameliorated to some degree by the need of the European colonizers for immigrant labor to develop the natural resources in most of the Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam.[33] The introduction of French techniques (such as dredging), extended rice cultivation into central and western Cochin China, thus offering the Chinese new commercial opportunities—in fact, within a very short time they monopolized the sale of rice. Of all the Indochinese provinces, therefore, Cochin China attracted the greatest number of Chinese. Situated between the Gulf of Siam and the China Sea, Cochin China also occupied an ideal position on the international maritime routes. The rich alluvial soil favorable to rice cultivation, accessible river communications, and a relatively well-developed domestic and foreign commerce appealed greatly to the Chinese with their primarily mercantile interests.[34]

In 1906 restrictions on immigration were imposed, and the French subsequently opposed the entry of the Chinese. However, prior to this time, the French had attempted to discourage immigration by imposing a series of regulations on the Chinese, including a head tax and an identification card system.[35] Earlier, in the 1830's, Minh Mang (Gia Long's successor) had levied a military tax on rich and poor Chinese and had attempted to curb immigration by requiring that each arrival be fingerprinted and be accepted by the chief of his village and congregation.[36]

Between 1906 and 1921 the Chinese entering the country were either sent for by their families or by Chinese firms desiring Chinese employees.[37] Immigration was, therefore, regulated by the demand for Chinese services. During the decade from 1921 to 1931, Vietnam was in the throes of economic development involving the expansion of trade, the construction of roads and railways, and the cultivation of virgin land. This progress was accompanied by another influx of Chinese into Cochin China. The world trade depression reduced Chinese migration between China and Indochina; indeed, departures from Indochina outnumbered the new arrivals from China. By 1936, however, a net gain in Chinese immigration was once more reported in Indochina.[38] According to one source, the immigrants were 65 percent male during periods of high immigration and 37 percent during low years. The presence of a predominantly male immigrant-population suggests that the majority of the Chinese were only temporarily established in the country and planned to return home when they had earned sufficient funds.[39]

The Japanese invasion of China in 1937 increased immigration from China to Vietnam to an estimated 400,000. In the years following World War II, illegal Chinese immigration, comprising both anti-Communist refugees and Communist infiltrators, rose sharply.[40]

From 1945 to 1948 the Chinese population in the principal cities doubled. Estimates at that time indicated 8,000 Chinese a month were reaching Cochin China from China as well as from North Vietnam.[41] The inflow of Chinese remained relatively unchecked, partly due to the Franco-Chinese treaty of February 1946—which "guaranteed to the Chinese their prewar rights of entry and departure and the most-favored-nation privileges of travel and residence"—and partly due to French preoccupation with the war effort.[42]

The Communist revolution in China necessitated the strict enforcement of immigration restrictions in Indochina. As of July 1949 "no Chinese could legally enter Indochina without a passport visaed by French consular officials at the foreign point of departure." [43] The French High Commissioner was also free to "expel any foreigners whom he regarded as a threat to the security of French troops." [44] Despite these restrictive measures, according to one source, most of the Chinese living in North Vietnam migrated southward in 1954.[45] In 1956, when the Republic of Vietnam required the Chinese born in Vietnam to accept Vietnamese citizenship and forbade foreigners to practice certain professions or to engage in commercial, industrial, or agricultural enterprises, a number of Chinese reportedly left the country.[46]

Settlement Patterns

Since World War II many Chinese are believed to have entered the Republic of Vietnam illegally both from China proper and from North Vietnam. Most of these immigrants have settled in the towns and cities, adding to the considerable strain on urban housing facilities.[47] During the Indochina War and undoubtedly during the present hostilities, the rural Chinese have been flocking to the cities for protection. In 1956 when Diem issued a decree requiring that Vietnamese citizenship be assumed by all Chinese born in Vietnam of at least one parent also born in Vietnam, it is believed that between 2,000 and 3,000 Chinese chose to leave the country (for Taiwan), rather than be obliged to accept Vietnamese citizenship.[48]

Until 1960, the Chinese were administratively organized into dialect associations called bangs, congregations, or Regional Administrative Groups. Originally founded by individual Chinese to protect their interests, the congregation system was retained by the French as a convenient method to control the large Chinese populace. Functioning on the basis of group solidarity, the congregations were each led by an elected president and council, who served as liaison between the Central Government and the members of the group. The congregation provided newly arrived Chinese (who were obliged to join such a group) with food and housing until they could find their own. The immigrants were then subject, in all legal, economic, and educational matters, to the powers of the congregation. Infractions could result in dismissal from the congregation and, thus, automatic expulsion from the country.

In 1960, Diem dissolved the congregations, which had assumed responsibility for the Chinese in the country for nearly 150 years and which had provided the Chinese community with such services as schools, hospitals, financial support, and legal aid. The property of the congregations, as well as the administration of the Chinese population, officially reverted to the Central Government.

The Chinese tend to settle in groups when first reaching Vietnam. Eventually, having established themselves and found an occupation, the immigrants may settle away from the Chinese enclave, often among the Vietnamese, while retaining cultural ties with their own people.

The Chinese live, according to their economic situation, in the same manner as do their Vietnamese counterparts. The wealthy urban Chinese live in French-style villas surrounded by well-tended gardens. Their furnishings, like those of the occidental, are both European and Chinese. The middle class Chinese live more simply in smaller but well-furnished houses. The coolie Chinese live in packing-crate shacks, on barges, sampans (a boat no larger than 3 by 10 feet which may accommodate a whole family and even a few pigs) or in the street.[49] No matter how poor the Chinese abode, it always contains "its dedication to the ancestors (in the form of a pennant), its altar of the ancestors, and its incense sticks that burn day and night."[50]

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The average Chinese is of medium height—between 5 feet 4 inches and 5 feet 7 inches. He has a round or oval head, a flat, broad nose, straight, black hair and yellowish skin. The Mongolian fold around the eye is usually present. Obesity is frequent. Generally speaking, the Chinese have lighter skin, higher cheekbones, more protruding jaws, and a heavier build than the Vietnamese.[1] The Hainanese exhibit marked physical differences from the other Chinese; they are more delicately built and show distinct cranial differences.[2]

Health

In mid-1962, the health and sanitary conditions among the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam, as among the rest of the population, were exceedingly poor. Potable water was frequently not available—even in larger cities. Overcrowded living conditions existed, especially in the towns. These factors contributed to the high incidence of malaria, tuberculosis, parasitic infestation, and such water-borne diseases as amoebic and bacillary dysentery and typhoid fever.[3] The plague, a rat-borne disease, has been common in the Chinese communities situated near grain stores, ships, and ports. Antiplague vaccinations and antirat measures have been taken in rat-infested areas.[4] Nutritional diseases, especially prevalent among the coolie class, are partially caused by the consumption of polished rice from which the outer layer, containing the vitamins, has been removed.

Chinese medicine is based on a mixture of faith healing and empiricism. When illness occurs, an appeal is first made to the supernatural forces through prayers and offerings to the ancestors; then home remedies made from medicinal plants are given to the patient.[5] When no improvement results, the pharmacist is consulted. Chinese pharmacies sell patent medicines for such minor ailments as colds, headaches, or upset stomach, as well as innumerable traditional types of medicine. The pharmacists prepare both "northern" or Chinese medicine and "southern" or traditional Vietnamese drugs (which include remedies of northern and central Vietnamese, Cham, and Khmer origin). Cham medicines are considered especially potent. The Cham in south-central Vietnam still administer a powerful medicine for back ailments. Cham medicine vendors often visit My Tho, Ben Tre, and Can Tho to care for regular clients of the Chinese and Vietnamese pharmacists.

The pharmacists frequently diagnose ailments, administer medicine, or apply such manipulative techniques as pinching, bloodletting, cauterizing, acupuncture, or suction with tubes.[6] Chinese medical practitioners are reputedly capable of diagnosing an illness on the basis of the pulse—the Chinese distinguish nine pulses in each wrist, each corresponding to a particular organ—and facial appearance. All the apertures of the head are considered windows. The patient's skin color, odors, skin exhalations, and the tone of the voice are also observed.[7] Chinese medicine, learned through apprenticeship, is based on ancient Chinese medical lore, the effectiveness of which, in many instances, has been proven by scientific research. Modern medicine and practices are employed, especially in the cities, as additional remedies for disease.[8]

In 1960 each of the dialect groups owned a hospital. The largest of the five hospitals, the Chung Cheng (140 beds), maintained an outpatient clinic and claimed to have a staff, facilities, and techniques "in the best traditions of Western medical science." [9] The example set by this hospital apparently inspired the other four Chinese hospitals to break with Chinese medical tradition. By 1960 these hospitals offered the Chinese population medical care comparable to that offered by Saigon hospitals to the general Vietnamese population.[10] According to one source, the property of the Chinese hospitals was appropriated by the Vietnamese Government,[11] but the hospitals apparently continued to function with the Chinese staffs. Specific information pertaining to the inclusion of the Chinese hospitals in the Government public health program was not available at this writing. It is known, however, that by late 1961, the Department of Chinese Medicine was represented by a Chief responsible to the Ministry of Public Health.[12]

The Chinese are practically indefatigable and are capable of engaging in hard physical labor for long periods at a time with only a bowl of rice and minimal rest to sustain them.[13]

Psychological Characteristics

The Chinese are aggressively enterprising in business, as is shown by their presence in every branch of industry and agriculture.[14] Indeed, until 1956, they controlled 90 percent of the retail trade and played a leading role in rice brokerage, lumbering, and transportation.[15]

Generally, however, the Chinese are peaceful and apolitical; they are primarily interested in making money to improve their own personal lot (and that of their family) and are willing to work feverishly to this end.[16] Distinct psychological differences have been observed between the exceedingly active, keen-witted Cantonese and the slower moving Hokkien and Toochiu.[17]

Although they are exceedingly polite and make a sincere effort to make the outsider feel at ease, they seldom, if ever, reveal their true thoughts. The average Chinese displays extreme patience and expects others to do likewise.[18] They despise being forced to do something against their will, and even more, being pushed around or abused.[19] An outsider's request is more likely to be fulfilled if he appears calm, patient, and unhurried.

The keystone of Chinese society is the family, which includes not only the immediate relatives but also the ancestors extending back for many generations. Indicative of this family-oriented culture are such customs as the retention of family patronyms from time immemorial, the presence in the Chinese home of an altar for practicing the cult of the ancestors, the traditional remittance of earnings to relatives in China, and a less developed sense of individualism than is usual in the West.[20] Traditionally, decisions were made by the family, which has led observers to claim that "social determinism prevented any marked development of private conscience or of moral will." [21] Devotion and loyalty to the family fostered nepotism in business and public office, often with detrimental results. Where weakening of family bonds has occurred, greater emphasis on individualism has usually resulted.[22]

The secondary loyalty of the Chinese is to the ethnic Chinese as a group.[23] Extremely proud of their origin, the Chinese attempt to maintain their distinct cultural identity; even though there has been considerable intermarriage with the Vietnamese, the Chinese spouse tends to keep a "Chinese home." Vietnamese Government legislation designed to assimilate the Chinese into the Vietnamese body politic has actually strengthened the bond between members of the Chinese community. Experience has shown the Chinese that strength lies only in unity. Indeed, this feeling of unity is reflected by the mutual aid which has contributed, in no small degree, to the penetration of the Chinese into practically every economic field and the achievement, by the group as a whole, of great commercial importance.[24]

Chinese loyalty toward the dialect group, although difficult to determine, doubtlessly exists, especially among first generation immigrants who still speak the dialects and engage in the occupations associated with the respective groups.* [25]

---

* See "Occupational Specialization by Dialect Group," p. 991.

General Attitude Toward Outsiders

The Chinese consider themselves superior in all respects to the non-Chinese. This feeling of cultural superiority, a matter of conviction, not arrogance, is demonstrated by their resistance to assimilation,[26] Indifferent to occidentals, the Chinese feel no need to mingle with them, since they consider the non-Chinese to be less intelligent than themselves. The Chinese are exceedingly cautious in their dealings with outsiders. They will observe a person and scrutinize his every gesture and facial expression for a considerable time before accepting him, if at all, as a friend.[27]

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Chinese place great emphasis on social relationships. Their Confucianist philosophy advocates the establishment and maintenance of an "orderly society" and stresses "right relations among human beings." The import of this philosophy is manifested by the number of institutions and customs which the Chinese have developed to perpetuate society and give joint protection to the individual. The ensuing discussion will not necessarily apply to all Chinese communities, classes, or individuals in the Republic of Vietnam. In fact, even the hierarchy of importance of these selected social subgroupings is open to question.

Overseas Chinese society is organized, in descending order of importance, into family, clan, surname association, and dialect group (congregation).[1]

The family is the primary social unit and the keystone of Chinese society,[2] for it has participated in "economic life, in social control, in moral education, and in government." [3] The Chinese family has assumed responsibilities which are performed in occidental society by health and unemployment insurance, old age pensions, and life insurance. The entire family is also responsible for the actions of its individual members. In addition, the rituals to honor the ancestors have made the family a strong religious unit, for the welfare of both the dead and the living is believed to depend on these ceremonies. Finally, the family provides moral education by an appeal to the motives of family devotion, loyalty, and pride.

The cohesiveness of the family unit is partially explained by ethical concepts. Traditional moral standards, strengthened by Confucianism, emphasize five relationships—those between king and subject, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. Notably, of these five relationships, three concern the family. Filial piety *(hsiao)*, according to Confucianist doctrine, is a cardinal virtue; the term hsiao implies, among other things, loyalty to one's parents and also to one's brothers. In purely practical terms, a strong, unified family is deemed necessary for mutual protection in a competitive and alien society.

The size and components of the family may vary considerably.

The small family may comprise the husband, wife, and children. This group may also include a few servants and relatives. The larger family may actually comprise several smaller families living under one roof and sharing a common life. Such a family might embrace several generations, each with its own apartment within the house. Some degree of community life would then exist within the family; there would be a head of the whole unit and perhaps (though infrequently) a common budget.

The Chinese family is patriarchal, the leadership passing either to the eldest or the most worthy son. Elders, even a widowed mother or grandmother, generally exert considerable influence. Residence is usually patrilocal, newlyweds generally residing with the family of the groom.[4]

Like the Chinese in South China, the Chinese immigrant belongs to a clan *(tsu)* or common-descent group. The tsu comprises individuals and families tracing their descent along the male line from a common male ancestor. The typical tsu in mainland China might include several thousand persons and hundreds of families, generally in one area. Tsu members bear the same surname and claim to be blood relatives. In Fukien and Kwangtung Provinces these bonds were traditionally especially strong; tsu activities were centered in the ancestral hall, where records of the deceased members were preserved. Male members of the clan honored the founder and the ancestors of the tsu periodically at rituals of tremendous religious significance. The ancestral hall itself symbolized the "corporate personality of the tsu and its authority over living members, and provided the setting for judicial, social, and philanthropic services." [5]

The elders of the tsu were responsible to the local governments for offenses of tsu members—with the exception of failure to pay taxes. The elders acted as a law enforcement body, resolving disputes between members and expelling those who refused to comply with tsu regulations. The tsu also assumed such social and mutual aid responsibilities as the construction of schools, the distribution of medicine, and the provision of free education. Thus, the individual, backed by his family and his clan, had no need to call on outside help except in times of disaster.

Although the Chinese immigrant always remains a part of the clan, because there may be only a few other members of his own clan in his vicinity, his bond with the clan is weaker than it was in his homeland.

Surname associations were probably organized in an attempt to satisfy some of the needs once filled by the tsu. Members of the surname associations bear the same name, originate from the same dialect region of China, and may even be blood relatives. For example, in Thailand those bearing the name Ch'en and originating from Hainan Island form the Ch'en Chia She or Ch'en Family Association, which meets annually in the association's headquarters. The function of the surname associations is primarily social, whereas that of the tsu was essentially religious. The officials of the surname association are chosen on the basis of wealth and enthusiasm, rather than of age. Membership dues support the Chinese schools, hospitals, and temples. The essential purposes of the associations, however, are to permit the Chinese to socialize and to remind the immigrants of their ties with China.[6]

The dialect groups—Teochiu, Hakka, Cantonese, Hainanese, Hokkien—were, and may still be, among the most influential organizations within the Chinese community; membership in these groups numbered in the thousands. Comprised of individuals originating from the same dialect regions of southern China, these organizations were formed as mutual aid associations to safeguard the interests of the Chinese minority and to satisfy its basic needs, as well as to raise the money needed to perform certain services for the Chinese community. Membership dues and generous contributions from affluent Chinese enabled the dialect groups to build cemeteries, schools, temples, hospitals, and clinics.[7] In 1935, the dialect groups were given police and tax collecting funtions as well. Thanks to these groups a Chinese immigrant arriving in Vietnam could be assured of assistance from Chinese speaking his own dialect and knowing his particular needs. The group would place him in contact with relatives and friends from his native village in China and give him food, lodging, and work. Once established, the immigrant could rely on his group whenever he needed assistance in any matter whatsoever. The Chinese called these groups "their family, their banker, their judges and their mandarin." [8] In 1960, Diem officially abolished these groups and took steps to appropriate the land and buildings once held by them; therefore, the extent of present influence of these groups over the Chinese minority is uncertain.[9]

Kinship and Clan Structure

The Chinese kinship system is founded on the principles of lineage, generation, sex, and seniority.[10] Descent is patrilineal, and both lineal and collateral relatives of the same patronym are included in one "sib relation" group. Relatives by marriage, such as women of the same patronym who have married and moved away, form the "outside relation" group. The principle of generation divides these two groups horizontally into "successive generation strata." Sib and generation, at least in the derivative sense, also regulate marriage; a Chinese may not marry within his own patronymic sib, and if the couple are in any way related, they must be of the same generation. Exceptions to these regulations, which date back to the Confucianist Canon (first millennium B. C.),* are becoming increasingly common.[11] Although kinship terms themselves, once clear and distinct, have merged, the Chinese still recognize a larger number of kinship terms (and therefore relationships), than do occidentals. The accuracy and inclusiveness of these terms enable the Chinese, who have always been interested in the kinship system, to describe the exact relationship of individuals without using numerative phrases.

Basic Kinship Terms [12]

Fu— father
Mu—mother
Tzu—son (also child)
Nu— daughter
Hsuing—older brother
Ti— younger brother
Tzu— older sister
Mei— younger sister
Tsu— grandparent (specifically father's father)
Sun— grandchild (specifically son's son)
Po— father's older brother (also older brother, husband's older brother)
Shu— father's younger brother (also husband's younger brother)
Ku— father's sister (also husband's mother)
Chin— mother's brother (also husband's father, wife's brother)
Yi— mother's sister (also wife's sister)
Chih— sibling's children (since A.D. 265-419; before: woman's brother's daughter)
Sheng—sister's son, daughter's husband
Fu— husband
Ch'i— wife
Hsu— daughter's husband
Fu— son's wife
Sao— older brother's wife

By combining these terms—which indicate sex and generation of the connecting sibling—with one another or with certain metaphorical extensions (non-kinship terms), specific and descriptive kinship meanings are established.[13] Such metaphorical terms include:

Wai— "outside, foreign" denotes relationship through female.
Tsu— "thrice venerated" denotes third parallel cousins in the male line.
Fu— husband, adult male, for males of one's own or younger generation, whether connected by blood or marriage; son's wife, woman, for females, the

---

* Ancient Chinese literature, especially the Confucianist Canon, includes almost all the relationship terms in current use, with the exception of colloquial terms. The *Erh y a*, one work of the canon, contains a whole section on relationship terms.

same as for male; father, for males of any older generation, whether connected by blood or marriage.

T'ang— "hall" denotes first parallel cousins in the male line, that is, the children of brothers.

When the above terms are combined with the basic kinship terms, words are formed which describe both the relationship and its meaning:[14]

Tsu fu— father's father: literally, "grand parent—par excellence old male."
Wai tsu fu—mother's father: "outside grand parents, old male."
T'ang ti— father's brother's son younger than oneself.

To express the above relationships in occidental terms would necessitate enumeration of the steps of kinship, both up and down, from a common ancestor.* [15]

Clans are unilateral descent groups. Lineage is determined through the male line, including all those who trace their origin to a common male ancester.[16]

Class Structure

Although social stratification exists in Chinese society, class lines are flexible and considerable social mobility is possible. Intermarriage between socioeconomic classes is not unknown. Theoretically, education, wealth, occupation, and possibly dialect group determine class distinction. A poor but cultivated man is as respected as a richer but less educated man.

Particular occupational groups generally fall into specific classes. The upper class includes presidents and directors of organizations such as banks, insurance companies, and rice mills.[17] Men of letters are also at the top of the social hierarchy.[18] The middle class comprises junior-grade officers in large businesses and partners in individual firms, pharmacies, grocery stores, restaurants, nightclubs, and gambling concessions. The rural middle class is almost exclusively concerned with commerce and is usually composed of village shopkeepers or agents. The lower class is largely composed of servants, coolies, and probably small farmers.[19]

Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

The dominant role of men in Chinese society is correlated with the position they hold in the family. At home, the Chinese man is the unquestioned head of the household and the link between the living and the dead. In this latter capacity, the man assumes the role of priest in conducting the ceremonies in honor of the ancestors. The man is also essential to the family for economic reasons.

---

* For a more detailed study of Chinese relationship terms, see T. S. Chen and J. K. Shryock, "Chinese Relationship Terms," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, XXXIV (1932), pp. 623–64.

While the girl marries and leaves home, the man continues to support the family throughout his life. The high esteem for the man is also attributed to the ancient Chinese philosophy of nature known as *yin-yang*. Yin is female and represents all the evil and darkness in the universe; yang is male and symbolizes all that is good and desirable. Confucianism accords to the man not only direction of the ancestral rites, but also a separate and free social existence. For this reason the Chinese man has been more prone to learn dialects other than his own and to adopt Western modes of dress and customs of eating than has the Chinese woman, whose role is still defined by tradition.

The woman's position in Chinese society is generally considered to be inferior to that of the man, although one source claims that while man and woman have specific roles, neither is treated as inferior or superior.[20] Since girls are considered less desirable than boys and are thought to be of little interest to evil spirits, a girl's name is frequently given to a boy to prevent the evil spirits from harming him. Traditionally, girls received no formal education; they learned, either from their mothers or from hard experience, how to manage the household and what duties a wife owed her husband and in-laws. The Chinese wife had no property of her own; even that given her by her family was destined for the support of her children and passed to them at her death.[21]

Traditionally, a woman was considered valuable not so much as a wife but as a mother.[22] In fact, before the birth of her first child, the wife received little consideration from her new family. She gained respect by bearing a son and eventually by becoming a mother-in-law and grandmother. After her death, the woman was revered, like her husband, through the ancestral rites conducted by her son. Failure to bear a son incurred reproach from her husband and family and, frequently, no provisions were made for her old age.[23]

No woman, according to one source, has ever risen to a position of importance in the Chinese community.[24] Traditionally, Chinese women neither took jobs outside the home nor participated in local political activities. Women marketed, visited the temple, attended movies, festivals and fairs, and participated in family celebrations for the aged outside the home. Because of her traditional seclusion, the Chinese woman generally knew little Vietnamese and retained her customary hair style and form of dress.[25] In the past, the enforced idleness of the upper class Chinese women had, in some instances, caused them to turn to gambling, opium smoking, and prostitution.[26] However, the traditional status of Chinese women has undoubtedly been, and will continue to be, modified by contact with other cultures and exposure of the women to formal education.

The Chinese desire to have many children, especially sons. If they are not fortunate enough to have sons, the more affluent Chinese may adopt a son, who then enjoys the same social status as a natural son. Girls are sometimes adopted by the wealthy to relieve the mistress of the house of such duties as cooking and cleaning. Among the poorer Chinese, the adopted daughters may become the wives of the sons.[27] When very young, children are taught to respect their parents, as filial piety is considered a cardinal virtue. In deference to the family elders, children and other relatives speak their parents' dialect in the home, although they may have learned other dialects or languages in school or through business contacts. Children also defer to their parents' wishes in matters of education, vocation, courtship, and marriage.[28]

Marriage

Marriage is extremely important in Chinese society. Since sons are essential for continuing the family line and maintaining the honors due the ancestors, failure to have a son is a major offense against filial piety. For this reason, almost all Chinese marry—the exceptions are the very poor, Buddhist monks, nuns, and Taoist ascetics. Since marriage is so important to the family, the parents are responsible for finding suitable partners for their children, for making the first overtures, and for the final marriage arrangements. Traditionally, the prospective bride and groom had no voice in the arrangements and did not see one another until the wedding ceremony. In recent years, however, young people, especially those who have received a Western education, prefer to choose their own partners.

Betrothals, almost as binding as the marriage ceremony itself, are negotiated by intermediaries who make contracts to provide for property—the gifts to be exchanged by the two families and the amount of the bride's trousseau. The groom's family usually sends gifts to help provide for the latter. If the bride's family is wealthy, her father may not accept the groom's gifts, but instead may give property to the bride to be managed by her husband for the support of the children and for their inheritance. A poor girl might be sent to her prospective husband's home to work as a servant, relieving her parents of the responsibility for her support.[29]

During the betrothal the two families exchange "eight-character notes" which give complete information about the future spouses. Diviners study the notes and the horoscope to see if a harmonious match is possible. The young man then sends the first gifts. If these are well received, the marriage day is officially registered in red (the color of happiness), gifts are exchanged, and the trousseau sent.[30]

Presumably parents may choose a spouse from the entire Chinese minority with the exception of those having the same surname. Sometimes marriages are arranged with Chinese in neighboring countries of Southeast Asia, but now brides are rarely brought from China, a practice that was once common. Parents usually try to select a spouse from their own dialect group, but cross-dialect marriages are not condemned. Since the marriage is meant to benefit the families involved, selection of a spouse is made from an equal or superior socioeconomic group.[31] Marriages between Chinese and non-Chinese, although not ideal from the Chinese viewpoint, have been frequent, particularly with the Vietnamese and Cambodians.

The marriage ceremony itself must take place in two stages during the waxing of the moon. The first stage, at the bride's home, "consecrates the breaking of the bonds uniting the bride with her parents."[32] The relatives and friends of the bridegroom then "kidnap" the bride and lead her to her future home. The second stage, the consecration of the marriage, takes place in the entrance hall of the groom's house. The bride's parents are not present during this ceremony, for they do not belong in the groom's house. Wearing a red veil to hide her face, the bride carries a red silk sachet embroidered with lotus flowers (defense against the possible maledictions of her mother-in-law).

After the marriage ceremony, all present partake of a large feast. Several days later, the bride makes a ceremonial visit to her parents' home to ask forgiveness for being kidnapped.[33] The bride is now a member of her husband's family and will revere their ancestors as well as her own. If she is especially maltreated by her new family, the bride's own family may bring pressure on them. The bride is the charge of her mother-in-law, who will guide and control her and will serve as arbiter in disputes involving wives of several sons living under the same roof.

Although not highly regarded by Chinese society, divorce is possible. A husband may divorce his wife for not bearing him a son, for neglecting his parents, committing adultery, stealing, being a shrew, having an incurable disease, or showing jealousy. A divorced husband may remarry, but a divorced wife can rarely do so. Widows and widowers may remarry, but it is considered virtuous for a widow not to do so. Since she is especially esteemed by her husband's family and exerts much influence in the household, a widow usually does not choose to remarry.

In the past, concubinage was legal and was prevalent among the wealthy Chinese. A man generally took a concubine for specific reasons: his wife's failure to bear him a son, the death of his wife's sons, the absence of love in his relationship with his wife, or the personal attractiveness of the concubine. When she entered the household, the concubine assumed an inferior position in the family, submitting to the legal wife in all matters. Generally, each woman had her own apartment within the house, or the concubine might have had an altogether separate establishment. If still practiced, concubinage is doubtlessly less important in overseas Chinese society today, particularly among those with Western education. In addition, for financial reasons, in the recent past adultery seems to have become more common than concubinage.[34]

Pregnancy and Birth

From before his birth until after his death, innumerable precautions accompany the evolution of the life of a Chinese. As soon as the mother is pregnant, the family begins calling on the divinities to ask their protection and favor. Among those divinities who might be solicited are the Taoist goddess and her acolytes who govern fecundity, confinement, and posterity. Koei-sing (God of Literature) and Lin Tong Pong (Immortal of the Scholars) are both responsible for bringing intelligent children. If the mother suffers a painful confinement, the shelf (see p. 975) of the Goddess of Delivery is brought to the home, with much ritual. Often the monks make amulets and talismans to paste on the woman's body so that delivery will occur.[35]

When the child is born, the family summons the diviners to study his horoscope. Traditionally, during his early childhood, the child had to wear certain items to protect him from the spirits, from fear, from enemies, and to insure health, wealth, and happiness. When the child was older, the parents took care not to rejoice in the fact that he was grown, for fear of arousing the jealousy of the gods. The child was given a cognomen: either the name of an animal, so that the gods would not know he was human; or that of a girl, to mislead the gods, who are interested only in males. Above all, a definite name could not be assigned the child before he reached puberty.[36]

Child-Rearing Practices

The Chinese are generally very fond of their children, taking great pride in their achievements. The value the Chinese place on children is evident by the number of children who wear amulets to defend them against the evil spirits. Such amulets might include: silver dog collars to deceive the spirits, silver charms in the shape of a lock, a chicken's leg, a bell, and jade or silver anklets. Children are not punished for such acts as risking their lives by dashing in front of oncoming vehicles; instead they are heartily congratulated by their parents—the closer the escape from danger, the more one's bad luck is cut off and transferred to another individual.

Chinese children accompany their parents everywhere and are permitted to stay up until all hours.

Traditionally, when infants under the age of 3 died, they were not buried for fear of causing the death of another member of the family. Consequently, their bodies were left exposed near cemeteries or were committed to the river. According to one report, this is the source of the myth that infanticide is common among the Chinese.[37]

Educational System

Until the 20th century, when overseas Chinese parents wanted their children to attend Chinese schools, they were obliged to send them to Hong Kong, Canton, or Shanghai. At the turn of the century, Chinese schools began to appear throughout Vietnam. (As used in this discussion, the term Chinese school refers to schools in which Chinese was either the language of instruction or the second language.) By 1931, at least 127 Chinese schools had been built to accommodate 214 teachers and over 7,000 students.[38] These educational facilities were autonomous, self-supporting, private institutions presided over by a board of education chosen by the Chinese congregations. The various operating groups included the congregations, private individuals, syndicates of business men, surname associations, and Chinese Chambers of Commerce.[39]

The Chinese educational system, resembling that of the United States more than it does the Vietnamese system, consists of 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of middle school, and 3 years of high school. The two secondary levels are becoming known as junior and senior high school, respectively, as opposed to the Vietnamese *lycee.* [40] These schools were, therefore, intended to educate the child entirely within the bounds of Chinese society from the beginning through secondary school.[41]

The French favored the Chinese congregation system, for it enabled them to supervise Chinese education and the activities of Chinese students. Thus, the French checked Communist activities, which were strongest in the schools, by closing some schools, placing others under surveillance, and by refusing permission to students for study in Red China.[42] Interestingly, after 1956, Communist China stopped encouraging overseas Chinese students from studying in mainland China, for it was argued, "Overseas students . . . no longer had the same value for China while she followed her United Front policy with Southeast Asia. They were not wanted as potential communist organizers in their own countries." [43]

On several occasions Chinese students who staged anti-French demonstrations were arrested and harshly treated, creating general displeasure among the Chinese.[44] At that time the three largest congregations, located in Saigon-Cholon, maintained the only Chinese schools in southern Vietnam and Cambodia. The language of instruction was *kuo-yu* or Mandarin Chinese, while English and French were taught as foreign languages.

This school system persisted until 1956 or 1957,[45] when the Vietnamese Government placed all Chinese schools under its supervision as part of its campaign to assimilate the Chinese. The Government restricted the curriculum and administration of Chinese schools, requiring Chinese secondary schools to use Vietnamese as the basic language of instruction and to accept Vietnamese principals and teachers. Consequently, the schools were closed for 6 months until a compromise solution—which allowed the appointment of local-born Chinese principals—was reached. At that time 47,709 Chinese students were officially enrolled in 180 Chinese elementary schools, and 12 Chinese secondary schools were located in the Saigon-Cholon area.[46]

Execution of the Government program proved very difficult; most Chinese teachers could neither read nor write Vietnamese, and most Chinese students could not understand the language. When members of the Department of National Education realized that the abrupt change was unfeasible and that immediate integration of Chinese and Vietnamese students in the same school was impossible, they agreed to a less radical solution. In 1958 a period of transition began, during which Vietnamese was taught first in the elementary grades in the Saigon-Cholon area, gradually extending to the higher levels.[47]

By the end of 1960, 400 teachers of Chinese origin had graduated from a special 6-month course in Vietnamese, under the auspices of the Viet-Nam-China Association, and Vietnamese was being taught in all Chinese schools in the Saigon-Cholon area.[48] Vietnamese educators reportedly still felt, however, that until the Chinese students enrolled in Vietnamese secondary schools they would not be qualified to enter the national universities, the civil service, or Parliament.[49]

An indication of the trends in Chinese education—the number of schools accommodating primarily Chinese students and the size of their enrollment—is provided by the following compilation of both official and private statistics·[50]

1957—180 Chinese primary schools enrolled 77,709 students; 12 secondary schools were operating in the Saigon-Cholon area (official).

1958—174 Chinese schools of all types enrolled 47,100 students (official).

1959—1,034 Chinese private elementary schools under Vietnamese Government control enrolled 43,510 students (private); a New China News Agency press report, however, claimed that Chinese high schools had all but closed.

1960—228 Chinese schools in the Republic of Vietnam enrolled 60,000 to 75,000 students; 120 of these schools, in the Saigon-Cholon area, enrolled 60,000 students and the rest, in the provinces, served 10,000 to 15,000 (official); 228 Chinese schools probably served no more than 60,000 students, or 7 percent of the Republic of Vietnam's Chinese population (private). The latter figures suggest, according to the same source, that "large numbers of Chinese youth were either avoiding school altogether; terminating early; studying outside the country; combining Chinese primary schools with an English/French/vernacular secondary education; or using non-Chinese schools exclusively." [51]

In 1963 Vietnamese educators announced to 15 Chinese primary and middle school principals in Saigon that, as of August 1, all Chinese schools [would] be obliged to "order their students to wear government specified uniforms during school hours; limit teaching of the Chinese language to six hours a week; step up instruction in the Vietnamese language. Primary school students failing to pass government sponsored language tests would be denied the opportunity to study in middle schools."[52] It is uncertain whether these requirements were enforced.[53]

A number of problems relating to the education of the Chinese are still unresolved. Children following a nationalized curriculum are obviously under greater pressure to acculturate than are those attending all-Chinese schools. The effect of this pressure is presently uncertain, for such ponderables still exist as "the effects of a nationalized curriculum on students' 'Chineseness'; how many years of Chinese training tend to produce what degree of Chinese identity; and what percentage of second, third, and subsequent generation Chinese children actually are using Chinese schools." [54] A more fundamental problem concerns the scarcity of instructional materials in Chinese. Although suggestions have been made to romanize the language, the Chinese continue to use their traditional form of written and printed characters. Since the Vietnamese cannot produce these instructional materials, the Chinese must depend on Free China to provide textbooks on a minimum fee basis, or on Communist China, which can smuggle in books filled with propaganda at no cost to the Chinese community. Although the Vietnamese Government guards against the latter possibility, the threat is nevertheless present.[55]

Death and Burial

Customs relating to death and funerals seem to vary somewhat even within the same city. When a death occurs, two large black and white Chinese lanterns are hung on either side of the door and the name of the deceased is written on a piece of paper and posted on the wall as symbols of death. Inside the house, people gather to view the dead person. Before his death, the sick man is taken from his bed (to prevent its being haunted by his ghost later on) and is made to lie on the floor without a pillow, so that he may die peacefully (*p'ing* means "flat" and "peace"). The deceased is dressed in his finest garments, which must have no buttons "so that the soul does not get hooked as it departs," and must not be made of animal hair, lest the deceased be reincarnated as an animal.[56] When the man dies, someone walks around the house calling the name of the deceased to make certain his soul has been released. The soul is then led to the temple and entrusted to the "celestial policeman," who has authority over the area in which the man died and will guard it temporarily.[57]

The body of the dead man remains in the house (traditionally for 49 days), lying in a coffin beneath a canopy on which are embroidered symbols of longevity (a dragon and a crane) indicating the unbroken chain of dependence between the living and the dead. That is, the deceased depends on the living who insure his survival; and they, in turn, count on him to bestow blessings and prosperity on them. A huge color photograph of the deceased is sometimes placed against the coffin. Then an oilwick lamp is placed at the foot of the coffin, and incense sticks burn throughout the period of exhibition. Small heaps of ashes lying about the room are kept until the eve of the burial, when they are scattered along the path the deceased will follow. Depending on the family's persuasion, officiants may be monks or priestesses who recite prayers and intermittently strike a gong, while musicians play solemn music on the Chinese flute. Friends and relatives, in ordinary clothes with a white (the color of mourning) harness tied at the waist and topped with a hood covering half the face, stand around chatting about unrelated matters.[58]

On the eve of the funeral, the family not only sprinkles the ashes but also lights small oil torches along the processional route to please the evil spirits who like to lick up the oil. In the lengthy funeral procession is a sedan chair, "to convey the soul to the nether regions," containing a photograph of the deceased and paper clothing (imitations of his own real clothing) for his life in the next world. After the burial the chair is burned, as are the clothes, lest they be haunted—"the cremation of an object [ensuring] supernatural life." [59] During the processions, the eldest son, wearing a crown and carrying a white stick indicating his role as the new head of the family unit and the link between the dead and the living, leads the family of the deceased. Delegates from the societies of which the departed had been a member also participate in the procession.[60]

The burial ceremony is elaborate and indicative of the Chinese concept of the soul. According to the Chinese, each person has two separate souls—the "animal" soul which remains in the body after death and is capable of attacking the living, and the "spiritual" soul which goes to hell. The latter soul returns to its former home on two occasions—the 3rd day after burial and between the 9th and the 19th day of the month of decease. In anticipation of the second visit—when the soul returns with other starving souls—the family summons the monks, who prepare a meal for the "visitors" and then swing sabers of wood or paper around the room to expel the souls.[61] Rites for the dead are conducted during each lunar month; at the Festival of the Wandering Souls, on the 15th day of the 7th moon, lotus-shaped lanterns are set on the water and allowed to drift, to light the way for souls seeking reincarnation.[62]
another have a dual significance for the Chinese: some are admittedly superstitious, while others are social ceremonies destined to "relieve emotional strain and give the participants a sense of increased social security." [63] In either case, all ceremonies are manifestations of the Chinese belief that all things are linked; "for Chinese philosophy, Heaven and Earth, the unfolding of the universe, and the life of mankind, ethics and the normal course of nature, form a closed and single system." [64] Man is not, according to the Chinese, opposed to nature but rather part of it; he is "an extension of the soil from which he derives his force and knowledge." [65]

Property Ownership and Inheritance Customs

The household head controls the family property—even that given the bride by her father on her wedding day. Traditionally, inheritance was closely correlated with the social status of each member within the family. For example, if the householder had two sons, a daughter, and an estate valued at $300,000, he might allocate one-third of his estate for his living expenses, for his wife, for his concubine, his old age, his funeral, and the subsequent com-

All these ceremonies of transition from one state of being to
memoratory rites. He would set aside perhaps $10,000 or $20,000 for his daughter's dowry; the rest he would divide between his two sons. The son of the wife would receive two shares, while the son of the concubine would receive one.

A tendency toward a more equitable division of property among family members has been noted in the recent past, especially among the overseas Chinese. Now the wife, the concubine, the wife's son, the wife's daughter, the concubine's son and the concubine's daughter often receive equal shares of the inheritance.[66]

SECTION V

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

Dress

Chinese dress varies according to class and region. For the most part, the wealthier, more worldly men have adopted Western suits; they seem to prefer light gray suits rather than those of white sharkskin worn by the Vietnamese upper class. Wealthy Chinese women wear the traditional formfitting dresses or *cheong sang* of expensive Chinese or French silk. Like their Vietnamese counterparts, these women wear high-heeled shoes and fine jewelry and carry handbags.

Middle-class women wear either the cheong sang or black, calf-length trousers with a short blouse, another traditional form of dress. For formal occasions they wear blouses and trousers of matching fabric and color. The men wear either suits or white shirts, gray or black tailored trousers, and dark-colored ties.

Lower class women generally wear white, short, Chinese-type blouses or light-colored fitted jackets and black or white calf-length trousers for domestic work. For more formal occasions they wear the same type of matched suits as the middle-class women, made of flashier and cheaper fabrics. Their hair is frequently worn in the traditional queue, although short, bobbed hair is becoming increasingly popular among all classes. The men wear high buttoned jackets and white trousers for work and short-sleeved sport shirts and light-colored pants for dress.

Coolies wear black, khaki, or striped shorts, a hat (Tonkinese, American, etc.), and go barefoot or wear wooden clogs. Black cotton or calico pajamas, sandals, clogs or bare feet are standard dress for coolie women.[1]

Folk Beliefs

The Chinese have countless folk beliefs relating to every phase of their existence. Although no information specific to the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam was available, the following beliefs and systems of thought may apply to them.

To the Chinese, all of the universe—moral, physical, social, visible and invisible—is an integral whole, the balance of which can be easily upset by a thoughtless act. Since everything is so tightly interrelated, even the most minor misdeed can set off a chain reaction and quickly produce cataclysmic results. To prevent such a catastrophe, the Chinese conceived the Calendar of Rites to serve as a guide to regulate Chinese life down to the most trivial act, to enumerate protective measures, to advise what days and hours are lucky and unlucky for doing certain things.

This concept is based on a Chinese system—dating from 2800 B.C.—of summating the universe by means of symbols. Basic to the system was the belief that the world is composed of two elements—the yang or positive male principle and the yin or negative female principle. Thus, for example, yang would represent the sun, light, fire, south, goodness, and the male sex; while yin would symbolize the moon, darkness, cold, north, evil, and the female sex. Implicit in these elements of the dualism which pervades all of nature is the idea of alternation, rhythm, fluctuation. "The Yang calls, the Yin replies. There is the opposition of the sexes, then their fusion, creating a rhythmic movement. It is also the alternate triumph of now one, now the other. In winter the Yang withdraws into the depths and the Yin dominates: there is dampness, darkness, and cold. In the spring the Yang reemerges and bursts forth; it is the torrent that flows after the melting snow, it is the rising wheat." [2]

In 2800 B.C. the Chinese used the principles of yang and yin as points of departure to establish their first notation of the universe. Each of eight elements—heaven, river, earth, mountain, water, wind, fire, and thunder—were composed of both yang (represented by a long unbroken line) and yin (represented by two short lines). One dissenting source claims the symbols were hexagrams and that from the yin and yang sprang the five elements—fire, water, earth, wood, metal—of the physical world.[3] When grouped around the universe—a circle divided into two interpenetrating, undulatory drops representing the mingling of two forces or the symbol of creation—the eight elements represented by eight trigrams or the Pa Kua could form 64 combinations—a complete cosmogony and cosmology. Divination was practiced by interpreting these symbols or trigrams.[4]

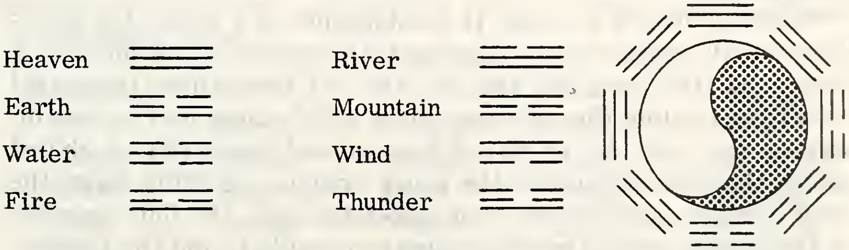


Figure 53

Moreover, each individual bears within himself both yin—in the form of *kuei* or evil spirits—and yang in the guise of *shen* or gods. One theory is that at death the shen rise to the heavens whereas the kuei remain on earth. Consequently, the kuei, both visible and invisible portents of evil, must be repelled in a variety of ways: by summoning a Buddhist monk to exorcise them; by carrying the images of yang gods through the streets; by beating gongs and lighting firecrackers; by displaying pictures of strong and virtuous men or officials (both of whom embody the yang); by doing good deeds; and by reciting passages from the classics. Charms may also be used; a paper inscribed with magic symbols may be affixed to a door or the same paper may be burned, the ashes mixed with water and drunk.[5] (The Chinese believe that burning an object imbues it with supernatural power. Even the slightest piece of writing must be burned. The ashes are then deposited in special pagodas, "pagodas of compassion to characters.")[6] Similarly, amulets made from the pit or wood of the peach (one of the earliest trees to bloom in the spring, and especially potent with the yang element) may be carried to keep the kuei at bay. Mirrors worn on the forehead are also effective in frightening away the kuei who, seeing his own repulsive face, forgets his evil designs. Many more customs associated with the kuei still figure to a greater or lesser extent among the popular Chinese folk beliefs.[7]

Belief in *feng shui* (literally, the influences of wind and water), a pseudoscientific system of thought, may still exist among some Chinese, although the influx of Western theoretical and applied science has doubtlessly reduced its import. Essentially a personal doctrine which could also be discussed as a religion, feng shui is founded on the concept that, "in every locality forces exist which act on graves, buildings, cities, and towns, either for the welfare or the ill of the quick and the dead. The object of feng shui, therefore, is to discover the sites where the beneficent influences predominate, or so to alter, by artificial means, the surroundings of existing sites that the same happy results may be achieved." [8] Specialists in feng shui are summoned to advise on ways of reaching these ends.

With the help of a *lo-pan* (a combination of a graduated astrolabe or early sextant and a compass)[9] the specialist considers such factors as "the yang and the yin; the *ch'i* (sometimes translated breath) pervading the universe and of which there may be two divisions, the *t'ien ch'i*, or ch'i of heaven, and the *ti ch'i*, or ch'i of earth; the four creatures—the azure dragon, the white tiger, the black tortoise, and the red bird associated with the four quarters of the heaven; wind (bearing water or drought); and the five traditional elements (metal, earth, fire, water, and wood), especially water." [10]

Although specialists may differ on the suitability of a particular site, they recognize certain ideal conditions: protection of the site from the north (the origin of the yin), exposure to the south (the yang), the presence of a natural feature such as a hill in the direction of the dragon (east), the existence of flowing water nearby but not leading directly away from the site (thereby draining off the beneficent influences).[11] Straight roads and railroads are also baneful, as malevolent influences move only in straight lines and draw away good influences.[12] If a site is considered inauspicious, the adverse influences may be neutralized by such artifices as a pool, a hill, a pagoda, a charm, or the image of a dragon on a mirror bearing the sign of a trigram.[13]

Feng shui is especially useful in selecting burial plots. The difference between a propitious feng shui of an ancestral grave and an unfavorable one may mean the difference between prosperity and ruin for the survivors of the deceased. Likewise the fortune of a whole city can be improved by the judicious construction of a temple, while the erection of a high building or tower can bring misfortune.[14]

Divination, the revelation of lucky and unlucky incidents, and fortunetelling also play an integral part in Chinese life. Each persons's fate is at least partially determined by the year, month, day, and hour of his birth. The six or eight characters resulting from the examination of each of these in the light of the ten "heavenly stems" and the twelve "earthly branches" are consulted by the diviner to determine lucky times for such matters as betrothal. Lucky and unlucky days are established on the basis of the five elements, the twelve animals of the earthly branches, the eight trigrams (Pa Kua), and the Calendar of Rites. Fortunetelling is done in many ways: by the examination of the physiognomy in terms of 14 animal types, by the interpretation of magic characters by a soothsayer, and by the casting of lots.[15]

Numbers fascinate the Chinese. In fact, they have devised a numerical system for analzing the universe. The number five is particularly sacred, for it represents, among other things, the five geographical divisions of the earth, the five seasons, the five elements, the five tastes, and the five musical notes, as indicated in the following table.

Geographical Points	*Seasons*	*Elements*	*Tastes*	*Musical Notes*
North	Winter	Water	Salty	4th Note
South	Summer	Fire	Bitter	2nd Note
East	Spring	Wood	Acid	5th Note
West	Autumn	Metal	Tart	3rd Note
Center	Center	Earth	Sweet	1st Note

The Chinese calendar comprises lunar months, "big months," of 30 days and solar months, "small months," of 29 days; the two are corrected by the addition of an intercalary month (a month added to make the year come out even). Years follow 12-year cycles or "earthly branches," each corresponding to a particular animal:

Sheep
Monkey
Cock
Dog
Pig
Rat
Ox
Tiger
Hare
Dragon
Snake
Horse

Before a couple is betrothed, the diviner compares, among other things, the signs under which the two are born. Certain signs do not combine well, for example:

> The horse is averse to the ox.
> The rat is averse to the sheep.

The union of a man born under the sign of the rat with a girl born under the sign of the sheep would, therefore, be inauspicious.[16]

Taboos

The Chinese have an infinite number of taboos, some of which are of an admittedly superstitious nature. Great emphasis is placed on names. A son never calls his father by his personal name nor does a wife use her husband's name. It is theoretically taboo for a marriage to occur between two people bearing the same patronym.[17]

On feast days, if something is dropped or broken, bad luck will result unless one says *sui-sui p'ing-an,* meaning "peace for many years." A broken mirror also brings bad luck but not for as long as 7 years—the Western superstition. On feast days extra places at the table are set for absent friends, to bring good fortune to the family.

Many taboos and folk beliefs are associated with children. For example, they must not open an umbrella indoors or put on two hats for fear of retarding their growth.[18]

Eating and Drinking Customs

Food and eating are of great importance for the Chinese. When calling on a friend, the Chinese often takes a gift of food to his host. In greeting a friend on the street, he may inquire as to whether he has eaten; a negative reply justifies breaking off the conversation.

In eating, the Chinese generally use porcelain spoons and what the Chinese call "nimble brothers" and foreigners call chopsticks. Among the upper classes and those who have been exposed to Western influence, knives and forks are becoming more common. In the past, accustomed to having food served in easily edible portions, the Chinese were appalled by the Western custom of dismantling large chunks of meat at the table. It is customary among some Chinese to spit, even before guests, and to remove from their teeth, with the help of chopsticks, pieces of bone or other food and place these on the tablecloth.[19]

Although rice is a basic part of the Chinese diet, a multitude of fruits and vegetables are also eaten. The main meats are pork, chicken, duck, and fish. These are usually eaten in their entirety, the innards being considered prized morsels. Other delicacies include the nest of a certain sea swallow from the Indonesian Archipelago, "hundred-year-old-eggs" that have been preserved in ammonia or lye, seaweed, sharks' fins, and sea slugs.

Tea is the favorite beverage, even among the very poor. Rice brandy is a traditional drink frequently served before a meal. Beer and wine are also popular. Wine of a brownish-yellow color is usually of low alcoholic content, whereas the clear variety may be 60 percent alcohol. Generally, wine is drunk hot from small stemless receptacles. In drinking wine with a group of friends, the Chinese may challenge one another in certain games. During a game of "fingers out," one contestant holds out a certain number of fingers; if the opponent does not display the right complement he must drink a cup of wine. Until the host gives the sign for "no heel taps" (the Western "bottoms up") the guests may "drink at ease." At the signal everyone must display the bottom of his cup, proving that he has emptied it. Each guest toasts his neighbor and refills the cups. Fishermen do not engage in this custom of toasting, for an empty glass foretells empty nets.

A number of taboos are associated with eating and drinking. Since rice is traditionally regarded as the staff of life, it is an insult to the host not to finish it. Chopsticks are never laid down across the rice bowl—to do so would be a breach of good manners and a portent of bad fortune. After a heavy meal and before drinking tea, each guest rinses his mouth, otherwise he would be insulting good tea. When tea is served, the spout of the tea pot should not be left pointing at anyone or a quarrel will ensue.[20]

Customs Related to Entertainment

The Chinese have innumerable forms of entertainment, many of which were traditionally closed to women. Unlike the West, where athletics are greatly esteemed and are associated with military prowess, the Chinese have traditionally scorned sports. This attitude is explained by the fact that in mainland China, the aristocracy, which always set the standard, was scholarly rather than military; scholars were obviously more concerned with developing the intellect than the body. Over the past 20 or 30 years, however, the Chinese, as a result of Western influence, have begun to participate in sports, their favorites being tennis, soccer, basketball, and swimming.

Games of chance and wit are favorite forms of diversion among the Chinese. Gambling is common among all classes and takes many forms. Among these is fan-tan, a game in which beans, coins, or other small objects are placed in a bowl, and the players bet on the number that will remain after the banker counts off a handful in fours. Mah-jongg is an ancient Chinese game played with tiles and is similar to dominoes. Each player draws and discards tiles in an attempt to acquire four complete combinations of three tiles each, plus one pair. Various card games exist as well as a type of chess.

Extremely gregarious and fond of conversation, the Chinese gather frequently to exchange bits of gossip with their neighbors over a cup of tea. Professional storytellers may circulate from teashop to teashop, entertaining the customers with amusing narratives or historical romances, often accompanying their recitals with a musical instrument. Through these minstrel-narrators much Chinese folklore has been passed on from generation to generation.

Opium smoking has always been popular with the Chinese, providing an escape much as alcoholic beverages do for many other peoples. The Chinese also smoke tobacco, usually in a pipe with a small bowl which holds only enough tobacco for one or two puffs. In the past, both men and women spent hour after hour filling, lighting, and smoking their pipes.

Other forms of entertainment and recreation include participation in festivals,* watching jugglers and marionette shows, and attending plays. From early historical, and perhaps prehistorical, times the Chinese have been fascinated by the theater, which was originally developed as a means of commemorating ancestral deeds. Unlike the West where the theater is the province of the upper and middle classes, their drama is accessible to Chinese of all strata of society. In fact, by presenting semifictionalized versions of Chinese history and by praising the moral life, the theater has provided even the illiterate with informal instruction.[21]

Customs Related to Animals

From time immemorial the Chinese have raised animals—pigs, dogs, and fowl. The Chinese introduced draught animals—water buffaloes—to Vietnam and taught the people to use them for agricultural purposes. Animals play a significant part in Chinese folk beliefs, divination, and in the exchange of gifts; some animals are considered fortuitous; others, inauspicious. The following examples indicate the types of beliefs and customs associated with individual animals:

---

* See "Principal Holidays and Festivals," p. 981.

Bats: The Chinese are not repelled by the bat, as are many Westerners. The design of the Five Bats which appears frequently in Chinese art symbolizes happiness and the Five Blessings—old age, health, wealth, love of virtue, and natural death.[22]

Butterfly: The butterfly symbolizes longevity. A gift with the design of a butterfly expresses the wish that the recipient reach the age of 70 or 80; when the design includes a cat, the wish is for a life prolonged to 90.[23]

Carp: This fish symbolizes success through endeavor, and is a stimulus to students to pass their examinations. By swimming upstream against the rapids, the carp was elevated to the state of a dragon—a kindly, benevolent creature.[24]

Crane: The crane escorts the soul to immortality; thus, the symbol of a crane appears frequently in funeral processions.[25]

Dog: The arrival of a strange dog at a house presages approaching prosperity. When a dog is sick, owners frequently make sacrifices at the altar of Erh Lang, nephew of the heavenly king, and his dog. They burn incense and make the dog swallow the ashes. A dog is taken from the litter if it has a white tip on its tail, a symbol of mourning. Dogs are not permitted to dig, for this foreshadows the preparation of a grave. The second day of the year is dedicated to dogs.[26]

Monkey: This animal is celebrated by Taoists and Buddhists for having stolen the peaches of longevity from the queen's garden in the Taoist Heaven. Since he was already considered immortal, Buddha had to be called in to deal with the monkey. Consequently, he was inprisoned until his sin could be propitiated; when this occurred, he was canonized as the "Great Sage Equal to Heaven." The monkey's image appears in Taoist and Buddhist temples; it is considered meritorious to honor him at almost any season to keep imps and hobgoblins away.[27]

Customs Related to Warfare

Traditionally, fighting and physical violence were not esteemed by the Chinese. Such sports as dueling, boxing, and fencing were considered forms of exercise rather than actual fighting. It was offensive for a person to lay a hand on another with the intention of harming him. People might engage in violent arguments, but they seldom came to blows. Suicide was honorable, however, and could bring malediction on one's enemy.[28]

Despite this prejudice, the Chinese maintained armies and navies and developed weapons, the evolution of which has paralleled that of the West. On the basis of archaeological evidence, for example, it is known that the Chinese were using spears, halberds, bows and arrows by at least the age of the Shang dynasty (1766 to 1123 B. C.) ; during the Sung dynasty, between the 10th and 12th centuries, the Chinese began using such weapons as flamethrowers, bombs, grenades, protomuskets and cannons.[29] Weapons currently used by the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam have been supplied by the Vietnamese Government.

Customs Relating to Outsiders

Chinese custom requires that an outsider be made to feel at ease and that he be shown politeness and consideration. Skilled in the art of diplomacy, a Chinese may greet the outsider with extreme courtesy, declare himself delighted to see the stranger and shower him with compliments, all the while remaining inexplicably elusive. At the end of the interview, therefore, the outsider may feel he has given completely of himself while his host has given nothing. Generally speaking, this barrier remains until the Chinese has had sufficient time to observe the visitor's every action and decide whether or not the individual is worthy of his friendship. At that point, which rarely occurs, he will suddenly become friendly and will do almost anything for the outsider.

The Chinese tend to group themselves culturally but intermingle freely, with some exceptions, with other ethnic groups. Although they consider themselves superior to the Vietnamese, the Chinese "often follow the same businesses, attend the same cinemas, eat at the same restaurants, belong to the same social organizations, attend the same temples and fortunetellers . . . " as the Vietnamese.[30]

Since the Chinese usually engage in commerce and their very livelihood depends on selling goods and services to the public, it is improbable that in daily encounters they reveal any enmities they might harbor toward other groups. However, the hiring practices of Chinese businessmen reflect how ingrown the Chinese really are. So strong is the family unit, that few Chinese businesses will hire nonrelatives, including other Chinese as well as Vietnamese. Consequently, local people often complain that they are unable to acquire certain skills because the Chinese, whose workshops provide the only places for learning these skills, refuse to teach them.[31] These practices, coupled with the fact that the Chinese completely control certain branches of economic activity, add to Vietnamese resentment toward the Chinese.[32]

Concept of Etiquette

The Chinese are noted for their elaborate and complex rules of etiquette, developed to facilitate social intercourse. Although conventions have been altered as a result of Western influence, many still remain. Underlying the conventions are principles set forth by the Confucianist school. Among the classics most esteemed for their emphasis on religious ceremony and social convention were the *Li Chi* or Book of Rites, the *I Li,* and the *Chou Li.* Moral significance was attached to performing the *Li* with both proper motives and correct form. Westerners have traditionally ignored the value placed on the Li and the mental attitude engendered by it.[33]

Another all-important principle is that of saving "face," which stems in part from the intense pride and sensitivity of the Chinese. They are willing to make various compromises to prevent an individual from suffering hurt feelings, public humiliation, or loss of reputation. For this reason, when disputes develop, an effort is made to keep the argument out of court by using private intermediaries as peacemakers.[34]

The ideal Chinese gentleman is expected to conduct himself in a dignified manner by walking slowly, speaking in a soft tone, and avoiding violent or abusive language. He is neither blunt nor abrupt and avoids making direct requests. When offended, he should not show his anger openly, but he may do so in a roundabout way—that is, returning an insult through an obtuse literary allusion. Unless they themselves have become Westernized, the Chinese are shocked by the direct, hurried manner of the occidental.[35]

In greeting a stranger the Chinese traditionally spoke deprecatingly of himself while praising the other. He would, for example, inquire as to the "honorable name" of the outsider and in return give his "unworthy name." In the past it was considered polite for a person to remove his spectacles when greeting a superior or an older person. Instead of shaking hands, he would clasp his own hands, perhaps shake them, and bow. In accepting a gift, he would do so with both hands. When offered the place of honor, to the left of the host, the guest would refuse several times, then take it after declaring himself unworthy.[36] Since evil spirits move only in straight lines, the guest was placed farthest from the door, and the host sat nearest the door to ward off the spirits.[37] When the host requested him to drink his tea, the guest knew that it was the signal for him to leave. Traditionally, it was considered acceptable to inquire of a person his age and income. When passing a friend in the street who was mounted in a sedan chair, it was considered good form to ignore him—otherwise, custom required his stopping, dismounting, and bowing according to convention. In exchanging gifts, custom dictated what present should be given, when, and how much of it could be accepted. Formerly, servants and those who had helped a person in some way expected to receive gratuities.[38]

SECTION VI

RELIGION

Chinese religion—a syncretism of ancestor worship, animism, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and in some cases, Christianity and Islam—touches on virtually every aspect of Chinese life and culture. In fact, Chinese religion is a way of life: Confucianism praises filial piety, loyalty, righteousness, and good faith; Buddhism extols compassion, kindness to all creatures, and protestation against all evil actions; Taoism advocates patience, simplicity, contentment, and harmony.[1] Each religion is marked by certain common characteristics—eclecticism, tolerance, optimism, morality, ritualism, worldliness, superstition, and social and individual emphasis—which are best understood by a brief discussion of each religion.[2]

Ancestor Worship and Household Deities

Ancestor worship is perhaps the most widespread of the abovementioned religions. The importance assumed by the cult of the dead is largely attributed to Confucianism. Many rituals associated with death, mourning, and burial were established by classics of the Confucianist school. According to Confucianism, for example, it is the filial duty of the eldest son to conduct the ancestral rites to perpetuate the memory of the deceased and to provide for the deceased after their death. Underlying this practice is the belief that the dead have the same needs as the living, which only the living can fulfill. The behavior of the descendants is believed to affect the welfare of the dead and, conversely, the dead may, through their conduct in the spiritual world, affect the future of the living.[3]

Ceremonies in honor of the ancestors are conducted for a variety of reasons; to help unite the family and the clan; to show sincere affection for the dead; fear; to win social approval; and to reap benefits from the deceased, who will intercede in favor of the living.[4]

Moreover, many practices are associated with the cult of the dead.* In the Chinese home, for example, may be an ancestor shelf—a small shelf attached to an inside wall (generally in a room which opens onto the street), on which are placed offerings of food and incense. Above the shelf may be a pennant of red paper about a foot long on which are inscribed black or gold characters giving the surname of the family, the number of generations it has existed, and the names of all the close relatives who have died.[5]

---

* For example, see "Death and Burial," p. 961.

The ancestors are honored during the New Year and other major festivals, especially Ch'ing Ming (Spring Festival), on the anniversaries of their birth and death, and on the 1st and the 15th days of each lunar month.[6]

In addition to rites performed in honor of the ancestors, the Chinese family recognizes and pays homage to certain household deities. Among these are the God of the Earth, God of the House, God of the Kitchen, and God of the Sky—not to mention a host of other lesser spirits. Each deity is represented by a particular image. The God of the Earth is a rectangular piece of paper, about 8 by 3 inches, bearing the Chinese characters for the god; this paper is posted near the threshold on the outside of the street door or on the outer wall of the house.

The God of the House consists of a piece of red paper, about 10 by 12 inches, bearing the Chinese characters for "God of the House." It is pasted near the floor on an inner wall near the street door. A box effect is sometimes created by a frame fitted around the paper or a table placed above it. The offerings are placed on the bottom shelf or on the floor, and the receptacles for making the offerings are stored on the top of the frame or table.

The God of the Kitchen is represented by a rectangular piece of red paper inscribed with characters, in black, meaning "Sure Luck Kitchen Master." This image is attached to the wall of the kitchen above the stove. In the past this god was said to return to the spirit world before the New Year to report on the conduct of the family. As a parting gesture meant to assure a favorable report, the family smeared the god's lips with molasses or jam. This ritual may be dying out among the Chinese in Vietnam.

The God of the Sky consists of a rectangular piece of paper inscribed with the god's name. It is pasted on the rear outside wall of the house or on one wall of an open court.

In place of all these gods, a general god may be represented by a piece of red paper bearing the Chinese characters for god and some honorific phrases. This paper is attached to an inner wall of the house above head level, and offerings are periodically made to it.

Every Chinese home contains images of at least one of the previously mentioned gods. The number and variety are determined by each family. Dialect differences seem to account for some of the variation. Some families devote more attention to their shrines than do others; in fact, some Chinese neglect them entirely. In any case, the religious responsibility rests on the wife, who honors the spirits by burning incense in the home and even outside on the sidewalk. On the 1st and the 15th days of the lunar month and during the principal Chinese festivals, before eating their first meal of the day, the family makes offerings to the spirits. The god papers are replaced with fresh ones at each New Year.[7]

These ancestral and household gods form part of a tremendous hierarchy of gods headed by the Supreme Ruler of Heaven, whom some say is entirely personal; and others, that he is impersonal. Included in this panoply of deities are Confucious and his followers, Lao-Tzu—alleged founder of Taoism—Buddha and, in some cases, Mohammed and Jesus Christ.[8]

Animism

Animism, interrelated with ancestor worship, survives in many forms: water, peach trees, and jade, for example, are considered to be imbued with supernatural powers. The strength of Chinese animistic belief is demonstrated by the importance placed on feng-shui,* a pseudoscientific study of the physical environment of a grave or house and the most beneficial conditions which can exist. It is associated with the magico-religious power of certain animistic spirits. Taoism also adopted many of the vague spirits identified with animism, concretized them and included them in the Taoist heaven.[9]

Taoism

Taoism (Tao means "the way"), originally both a philosophy (Tao-chia) and a religion (Tao-chiao), gradually became a handmaid to Buddhism. From the latter, Taoism acquired its priesthood, its canon, and its belief in the idea of transmigration and of karma (force determining destiny in one's next existence). Yet Taoism still exerts great influence over Chinese life and culture, particularly because of its acceptance of popular superstition. From the very beginning—approximately the first century, B.C.—Taoism was a "conglomeration of sorcery, arts of priest-magicians and the philosophy of the yin-yang school, e.g., all things are products of cosmic negative and positive forces." [10]

The Taoist pantheon contains a multiplicity of gods; there are deities for animate and inanimate objects, for stars, even for parts of the body.[11] Some contend that the highest of these is "The Jade Emperor" (Yu Huang), the supreme god of the whole universe. The Taoists have a trinity, "The Three Pure Ones" (San Chi'ing), although the individual members may vary—Lao Tzu, Yu Huang, and the mythical ruler P'an Ku† are one combination. The "Three Rulers" (San Kuan) is another trinity sometimes believed to comprise Heaven, Earth, and Water and the three (perhaps legendary) rulers Yao, Shun, and Yu. Temples are frequently erected to gods who are actually personified ideas, mythical beings, and deified human beings.[12] There are three types of Taoist heavens—ten "Heavenly Grottoes," thirty-six subsidiary "Heavenly Grottoes," and seventy-two "Blessed Places"—ruled by immortals.

---

* See "Folk Beliefs" for a more detailed discussion. p. 964.

† *Ibid.*

Among the primary objectives of Taoism are happiness, wealth, health, the bearing of children, and longevity. Those who truly wanted to follow the Tao, that is, to realize the Three Original Principles of Taoism—Essence, Vital Force, and Spirit,[13] adhered to a regimen which included "meditation on Taoist truths, the cultivation of such Taoist attitudes as inaction and placidity . . . carefully regulated breathing, diet, discipline, moral living, and partaking of substances supposed to prolong life, such as seeds and resin of evergreens . . . products of such plants as the plum, and certain minerals and jewels—gold, jade, and the pearl." [14]

Alchemy and astrology are integral parts of Taoism. The true Taoist seeks to achieve immortality by means of magical practices and drugs. Not only are these drugs believed capable of prolonging life for centuries, but they rejuvenate the body and enable the immortal to walk through fire unharmed, walk on water without sinking, rise into the air, control the spirits, and revive the dead.[15]

Superstitions are also an important part of Taoism, as is shown by the belief in geomancy (divination by means of figures or lines), fortune-telling, divination, and the use of charms and amulets.[16] Traditionally, Chinese scholars and the more educated classes scorned Taoism as the "superstitious cult of the 'stupid people.' " [17] They also associated medicine with Taoism, and as a result neglected it. Science was considered the province of the "ignorant and lowly" and was therefore left to the Taoist priests.[18]

Taoist professionals are called *tao shih*. The tao shih are recluses seeking immortality by meditating and leading ascetic lives; celibates living in monasteries; or married people living at home but earning a livelihood by officiating at burials, writing charms, exorcising evil spirits, or communicating with the dead. A devotee of Taoism enters the professional ranks through an apprenticeship.[19]

In the past, Taoist belief was associated with secret societies which were instrumental in overthrowing Chinese dynasties. In Communist China, the Taoists have been persecuted as counterrevolutionaries.[20]

Confucianism

Confucianism is largely a Western term applied to the system of thought set forth by the sage Confucius (551–479 B.C.) and his followers. The Chinese generally call this body of thought K'ung

Chiao ("Confucian Teaching") or Ju Chiao ("Teaching of the Learned"). Confucianism is frequently considered to be a philosophy, since much Confucianist thought concerns the organization of the state, of society, and the relationships between men. But Confucianism also contains religious elements which are viewed by the Chinese as a form of *chiao* meaning "to educate." [21]

Religion, according to the Confucianists, is primarily moral cultivation, but spiritual overtones and practices are also present. Confucius did not concern himself with spirits and the afterlife except to say that spirits should be respected but kept at a distance. That is, men should learn to direct their own destinies instead of placing themselves at the mercy of the spirits. Confucius taught his followers to believe in a heaven but only as the source of all moral law and principles. Heaven, according to Confucius, "is not anthropomorphic and 'he does not speak,' but he is superhuman, purposive, the source of truth and goodness, completely overwhelming and mysterious." [22] For this reason the "Confucianists call their Way the 'Way of Heaven' and their Principle the 'Principle of Heaven.' " [23]

Placing great emphasis on the practice of religious ritual, Confucianism has always promoted such ancient rites as the worship of heaven, homage to ancestors, and the commemoration of great men. In the past, the Emperor, representing the people, performed annual rites at the Altar of Heaven to ensure cooperation between man and the universe, to give thanks, and to pray for a good year. Confucianism advocates the sincere performance of rites of ancestor worship, not because ancestors have power over the living, but rather to unify the dead and the living and so strengthen the family unit. To show respect for great men, Confucianists, as a matter of tradition, built temples in their honor and performed seasonal rites to them. The most respected of these was and is, of course, Confucius; temples in his honor have been erected in nearly all Vietnamese provinces. In general, however, Confucius has not been deified but has been given such titles as duke, king, "Great Perfection, Ultimate Sage and Foremost Teacher." [24]

Confucianism is not an institutional religion with a sacred scripture, clergy, or creed; it is, however, religious in its observance of traditional rites and in its philosophy. Confucianism does not teach immortality in the sense of the existence of a heaven and hell; it does teach immortality in the humanistic sense of virtue, wisdom, and achievement. Good and evil ensure their own consequences.[25]

Confucianist temples, located in the major towns of the Republic of Vietnam, contain only altars, honorary tablets, and maxims from Confucius carved on panels. Traditionally, Vietnamese, and perhaps the Chinese, Confucianists celebrated the festival of Confucius in the autumn, on a day designated by the astrologers. Offerings of flowers and rice wine were placed on the maxim altars and an invocation read before each one. The ritual was repeated before the altars of the four philosophers, the altars of the parents of Confucius, and the 72 tablets of the eminent scholars. Instead of temples of Confucius, villages have altars to the Master of Philosophy; larger villages might group together three altars in one enclosure, whereas smaller villages would have only one.[26]

Confucianism has had a profound effect on the economic organization of Chinese society. Coupled with the cult of the ancestors, Confucianism stresses the importance of family, the creation of a true kinship society, and the procreation of male heirs, essential to the perpetuation of the clan. Largely due to Confucianist teaching, the Chinese family forms a tight economic unit, an affluent member often providing for all. A consequence of Confucianism has been the tendency to avoid risk unless the interests of the family are at stake.[27]

Buddhism

The Chinese have been deeply influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, which is intertwined with Taoist and Confucianist elements.[28] By winning the favor of Buddhist divinities, the Chinese hope to dispel the evil and receive the good of this life; by doing charitable works, supporting the temple and monastery, saying prayers, and following a vegetarian regimen, the Buddhist can acquire merit which may be useful in the life beyond the grave.

The vast Buddhist pantheon includes both foreign (Indian) and indigenous gods. Mahayana Buddhists revere innumerable Buddhas, including Gautama and especially Amitabha Buddha. At death, those of the faith of Amitabha Buddha allegedly enter the Pure Land (paradise) or "Western Heaven." In addition, Buddhists worship bodhisattvas as deities (persons, living or dead, who refrain from entering Nirvana in order to save others). Among the most widely worshiped bodhisattvas are Kuanyin, Goddess of Mercy, who is reputed to deliver the believer from danger and to grant children; Ti Tsang (called God of Hell); and Wen-Shu, the embodiment of wisdom.[29]

The true Buddhists are mainly the professionals—the monks *(ho shang)*, the teachers of Buddhist law *(fa shih)*, and the nuns. A man desiring to become a monk enters the monastery as a novice, and at that time takes 10 vows, including promises not to steal, take life, be unchaste, lie, or drink alcohol. A monk tutors the novice in the sacred writings and in the ritual. The majority of the monks know only a small part of the ritual and may not even comprehend the meaning of the little they know. A small group of monks are, however, extremely learned, having spent their lives meditating.

With the completion of his novitiate, the candidate enters the state of *lohan,* when he is seeking his own salvation. Lastly, he takes the vows of a bodhisattva to seek salvation for others as well as for himself.

The monk abides by certain rules of conduct. He must remain celibate, serve as a monk for life, eat no flesh, and continue to adhere to his earlier vows.[30] The Chinese monk wears grey, brown, or saffron-yellow garments consisting of a loose-fitting, long-sleeved jacket and trousers. Chinese monks are rarely called by the Chinese except in times of misfortune and death; they are invited into the Chinese home only to conduct funeral services. When the gods are favorable there is no need for the monks' services.[31]

Chinese Temples

Chinese temples combine Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist, and animistic elements. Designed along traditional Chinese lines, the temples are made of brick or stucco with tile roofs and dragons under the eaves. Taoist gods and Mahayana Buddhist images are often present in the temple. In some areas the temples are in disrepair, indicating a decline in the influence of the temple in the Chinese community. The temples depend on public support, for in Chinese temples no collections are taken—the very idea is offensive—but money is acquired through the sale of incense, candles, and voting papers. In addition, the temples receive money through the services of votaries (fortunetellers), donations, and fees for the services of the monks.[32]

There is no congregation in the Chinese temple. The laity consists of those wishing to worship in any temple at any time. Worshipers may attend a certain temple until the gods there no longer benefit them, at which point they may choose another. Most worshipers visit the temple only on the 1st and 15th days of each lunar month and during religious festivals. On these occasions the temples are filled to capacity with worshipers and their offerings. Worship is on an individual basis and consists of bowing, praying, burning incense and candles, or offering food, drink, and paper money to a certain god. The monks do not as a rule take part in the rituals.[33]

Principal Holidays and Festivals

Most Chinese holidays and festivals have an underlying religious significance, although the social and recreational aspects are sometimes more evident. Some holidays are observed only within the home; others, by the whole community. Not all festivals are of equal significance, and the importance of each may vary according to the community. Among the principal Chinese holidays are: the New Year, Lantern Day, Ch'ing Ming, Fifth Month Festival, Chung-yuan, Mid-Autumn Festival, and the Winter Festival.

The most important Chinese holiday is the New Year, which begins on the first lunar month, and lasts for 3 to 5 days. Since the Chinese measure time by both the lunar and the solar month, with an intercalary month added in some years, the date of the New Year varies, the earliest being January 21 and the latest February 19. New Year preparations begin a week in advance, when people bearing elaborate offerings flock to the temples. Moreover, food is prepared in advance because, according to custom, no cutting implement may be used during the New Year festival, and nothing may be killed on the first day of the year. Gifts of money wrapped in red paper are given the children; god papers are renewed.[34] A few days before the New Year, the Kitchen God is believed to return to heaven to notify the gods of the family's conduct since the last anniversary. The family signals his departure by burning the god's image and welcomes his return, on the eve of the New Year, by pasting a new image of him over the kitchen stove.[35]

The New Year is a time for paying debts, feasting, visiting friends and relatives, honoring the ancestors and exchanging gifts —usually of food. To accept all the contents of a gift basket is considered a breach of etiquette; a portion is usually returned to the sender as an indication that the gift is too generous. During the first 10 days of the New Year, all the gods are worshiped, the birthdays of all domestic animals celebrated, and all the stars are honored. With the advent of each new year, another year is added to the ages of all family members. During this festival the Chinese also celebrate birthdays, thus a child is 1 year old at birth and 2 years old after the first New Year.[36]

Lantern Day, on the 15th day of the first lunar month, is primarily a religious celebration. Traditionally in southern China, during this holiday marking the official end of the New Year festival, a procession displayed the image of Buddha, and lanterns were hung out at each home. In Thailand, the Chinese have no procession but give dinner parties at home and visit the temple to determine whether or not the gods will favor them in the coming year. This determination is made by casting on the floor two small pieces of wood or *bei*, each having one flat and one round side; the gods will be favorable if one flat side and one round side turn up. When this happens, the individual buys cakes and candy at the temple and promises to pay more, the interest on the debt increasing at each throw. The confections—replicas of temples and lions of hard white sugar—are taken home to the children. In the evening families again visit the temple to make offerings of oranges, noodles, incense, and candles.[37] The Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam also use the bei, but whether the above ritual is observed is not certain.

The principal spring festival is Ch'ing Ming, celebrated at the end of the second or the beginning of the third moon, when the family visits the graves of the ancestors, cleans and repairs the tombstones, and makes offerings. When the ancestors were cremated, their remains were placed in tin boxes and stored in warehouses. During Ch'ing Ming, the family opens the boxes and makes the traditional offerings by burning incense and paper money and by presenting food and drink. Chinese musicians sometimes play on this occasion.[38]

The Fifth Month Festival, sometimes called the Dragon Boat Festival, falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. Originally boat races were held on this day, but today offerings are made to temple gods, animistic shrines, and household deities. Women prepare cakes of glutinous rice and nuts, offer them first, as a ritual, to the gods and then serve them to the family. This festival is mainly social and serves to break the daily routine.[39]

Chung-yuan, on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month, is a time to commemorate the ancestors. Observance of this day varies according to the dialect group. In Thailand, the Cantonese, in lesser numbers than at Ch'ing Ming, visit the cemeteries, make offerings to the ancestral spirits, and clean the graves. The Teochiu observe the day at home, for they believe the spirits wander and may be dangerous if not appeased. Elaborate offerings of food and drink (whisky, Coca-Cola) are made, paper money burned, and coins and rice thrown around the shop or home. According to traditional belief, if the spirits are sufficiently tempted by these offerings, they will not molest the family. In the evening these offerings are consumed by the family.[40]

The Mid-Autumn Festival or Moon Festival, on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, is almost as merry a celebration as the New Year. In the evening, shopkeepers set up richly decorated tables on the sidewalk and display all their wares, especially such things as cologne, face powder, and silks, as well as gold and silver paper which will be burned at the curb. Suspended above the displays are lanterns—shaped like fish, temples, and airplanes—as well as gas lamps. Until midnight, crowds of people stroll about the streets and watch actors perform on stages erected in the squares. Women turn out in great numbers, because the Moon Goddess is said to appear at this time to listen to and sometimes grant women's requests. Offerings are also made in the temples and homes. At midnight the family is supposed to sit beneath the full moon and eat moon cakes made of coconut and dates. This custom commemorates the Chinese rebellion against the Mongols, when the Chinese population read the announcement of the rebellion on slips of paper hidden in cakes. In addition, the festival is a time for strengthening the emotional ties of the Chinese with their homeland.

The Winter Festival, on the 25th day of the 11th month, is a time for integrating the family. Sweetened flour balls are presented to the household gods who are believed to return to heaven and report on the family. Eating these flour balls also assures the individual of good fortune during the coming year. On this day, all the family returns to the parental home and partakes of a feast.[41]

Competition is so keen in the Chinese community that the Chinese generally work Saturdays and Sundays and take no more than 3 days a year for holidays—except for occasional weddings and funerals.

The various festivals, like the Chinese religion in general, give moral support and comfort to the individual in time of crisis and misfortune. They also help to reinforce the solidarity, mutual aid, and cooperative characteristics of the Chinese and to strengthen their emotional ties with the homeland.[42]

Summary

To summarize, Chinese religion is essentially optimistic. Men, according to orthodox Confucianism, are naturally good; human life is worth preserving. Prosperity ensues from obedience to moral law, and disaster results from evil actions. Buddhism reinforces this optimism, teaching that good triumphs over evil. Chinese religion is also strongly ethical. Confucianism stresses man's duty to man and praises such virtues as filial piety, loyalty, and sincerity. Buddhism also emphasizes that suffering results from wantonness.

All Chinese religions, some more than others, emphasize ritual. In certain cases the stress on the performance of ritual is stronger than that on living an ethically good life. Confucianism, however, unites ethics and rituals in the belief that ritual is meaningless unless performed with a moral purpose; conversely the performance of ritual assists in moral development.

Chinese religion is both utilitarian and nonutilitarian. The social aspects of religion were meant to facilitate relations between man and man and between man and the spirits. Taoism provides the means for attaining immortality on earth; according to Buddhism, man can aspire to a blessed afterlife by adhering to its doctrine. The superstition of the Chinese reinforces the utilitarian aspect of their religion. Offerings are made to obtain immediate protection or benefits. Lastly, Chinese religion has both a social and an individual facet; Confucianism teaches that religion is destined to save society, yet, together with Buddhism and Taoism, it also aims to perfect the individual.[43]

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The role of the Chinese in the economy of Vietnam has been compared with that of the "blood circulation system of a human body." [1] This indispensability is explained by the fact that the Chinese have penetrated virtually every field of economic activity, especially trade—four-fifths of Vietnamese trade was in Chinese hands in 1958—banking, and commerce. The Chinese exert a tremendous influence over the country's agriculture; although few are directly engaged in farming, their loan and transportation facilities are of vital importance to Vietnamese farmers. Even in outlying regions, the Chinese are in close contact with the majority of the populace and have established a complex economic structure on the basis of trust and credit.[2]

To integrate the Chinese into the Vietnamese body politic and to loosen the Chinese stranglehold on the economy, Ngo Dinh Diem issued two ordinances—one primarily political and the other economic—specifically directed at the Chinese.[3] The first decree, Ordinance No. 48 of August 21, 1956, imposed Vietnamese citizenship on all Chinese born in Vietnam.[4] The local-born Chinese (estimated to number about 500,000) were obliged to adopt Vietnamese names, pay taxes, and register for military service as Vietnamese citizens. All other Chinese were considered foreigners.[5] The other ordinance, Decree No. 53 of September 6, 1956, prohibited foreigners—namely Chinese nationals—from engaging in 11 professions; foreigners could not be fishmongers and butchers; retailers of products in common use (*chap-pho*); coal and firewood merchants; dealers in petroleum products; secondhand dealers; textile and silk merchants handling less than 10,000 meters; metal scrap dealers; cereal dealers; transporters of persons and merchandise by surface vehicle or boat; rice millers or processors; and commission agents.[6] Thus, no longer were Chinese allowed to be merchants exclusively. Those in the first seven professions were allowed 6 months in which to comply with the decree, while those in the last four were given 1 year to liquidate or turn their businesses over to Vietnamese.

Needless to say, the two decrees had far-reaching effects, causing civil disobedience and diplomatic reactions in Taiwan as well as in Saigon.[7] The Chinese countered almost immediately with economic reprisals which nearly precipitated the collapse of the Vietnamese economy.[8] They withdrew large sums of money from their banks, until almost a sixth of the country's currency—between 800 million and 1.5 billion piasters—had been removed from circulation. In an earlier article, the author who cites these figures says the Chinese withdrew only 400 to 600 million piasters and "sat on it." [9] The value of the Vietnamese piaster on the Hong Kong free market was temporarily depressed from the official 35 to $1 to 90, and to 105, and finally to 81 (the normal free rate being 75 to 80 to $1).[10]

Chinese in charge of the Hong Kong and Singapore markets were urged to boycott Vietnamese rice; as a result, the country's rice exports virtually ceased.[11] Distribution problems resulted because of the insufficient number of Vietnamese willing to take over Chinese businesses; only 34 percent of the total businesses in the restricted categories found Vietnamese willing to assume ownership. In the Saigon area, for example, only 96 Vietnamese came forth to claim 1,013 chap-pho (grocery-general stores) vacated by the Chinese. By mid-July 1957, the number of unemployed Chinese had soared to 25,000 in the Saigon area alone.

Repercussions from the Government decrees were also felt in remote rural areas. Chinese rice millers, who usually lent money to the Vietnamese farmers to help them through the lean months prior to the harvest, refused to lend money and the Chinese middlemen who generally transported the farmers' rice, pork, and other products to the mills and to market failed to do so. Consequently, farmers turned to barter for their needs, and products were sold on the spot at any price.[12]

Only when the Chinese had partially withdrawn from economic activity was the extent of their economic power fully revealed. Due to their unusual system of credit and exchange and their elaborate commercial networks, the Chinese had frequently completed large business transactions on a small monetary base.[13] These factors, coupled with the loss in tax revenue from the Chinese businesses, explained the depletion of Government funds and the consequent inability of the Government to pay customs and storage rates on consumer imports which were flooding the country. Consequently, tons of merchandise—which now had to be paid for in advance—stockpiled in the ports and deteriorated for want of proper storage facilities.[14]

When the economic crisis failed to improve, despite capital aid from the Government and lowered bank rates, the Government in July 1957 relented and agreed to compromise. The Chinese were to be permitted to reopen their shops on the condition that they would take Vietnamese partners, or a Vietnamese wife in whose name the business could be placed, or that they become Vietnamese citizens. Refusal to comply with these conditions would result in deportation to Taiwan. Later events showed that the compromise had been a mere face-saving device for the Government, and the Vietnamization of the economy had been only nominally achieved. The nature of the compromise was revealed in partially secret testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee in March 1958:

> The Vietnamese required that the second-generation (i.e., born in Vietnam) Chinese own at least 51 percent of the company. That enables them to say it is a Vietnamese company. Their parents, who retain Chinese nationality, own 49 percent. Of course, it is all the same group of people, but it is a Vietnamese operation with Chinese support.[15]

By December 1957 most Vietnamese companies were believed to be of this type. According to a census of importers, producers, and end users, 677, or about 25 percent out of a total of 2,758 such enterprises, were still fully Chinese owned at the end of 1957.[16] In 1961, the Chinese controlled more than 80 percent of all capital in retail trade[17] and 75 percent of Vietnam's economic activities.[18]

Thus Decree No. 53 weakened the Vietnamese economy and aggravated the already strained relations between the Chinese community and the Vietnamese Government. Further alienation of the Chinese resulted when the Cholon police commissioner forced Chinese merchants and intellectuals to organize "wipe-out illiteracy" classes in which Vietnamese was to be the only language of instruction, to remove all Chinese signs from their shops, and to Vietnamize their names. The absence of free choice, not the principle behind these orders, annoyed the Chinese. In fact, it is precisely this failure on the part of the Government to allow the Chinese free exercise of their will which explains why the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam, contrary to those in other Southeast Asian countries, have fought so hard to preserve their Chinese citizenship.[19]

Predominant Occupations

The Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam are engaged in practically every occupation, from agriculture through banking and light industry, to wood carving and shoemaking.

Agriculture. Even prior to the arrival of the French, the Chinese had been especially active in the cultivation of pepper, mulberries, and tea, market gardening, and pigbreeding. Pepper is grown mainly in An Giang, Kien Giang, and on the island of Phu Quoc according to very exact, time-honored methods.[20] In the past, Chinese landowners imported their own countrymen from Hainan to work in the pepper fields, and the Chinese owned most of the large market gardens adjoining the major towns, which provided the populace with local as well as Chinese vegetables.[21] Because the return on rice cultivation is meager, competition from native cultivators great, and because in the past the Chinese were barred by law from owning the best ricegrowing land,[22] the Chinese do not generally cultivate rice. There are, however, exceptions: in Ba Xuyen and An Xuyen Provinces most of the rice production is in Chinese hands. Most Chinese farmers are of Teochiu, Hakka, and Hainanese origin.[23] In Da Lat, Baria, and other wooded areas throughout the country, the Chinese engage in small lumbering enterprises whose products are mainly destined for local markets. In 1957, there were 276 such enterprises, 160 of which had main offices in the Saigon-Cholon area.[24]

Rice Processing. Traditionally the rice trade has been controlled by the Chinese. In the past they dominated every phase of rice marketing, transportation, and processing; it was estimated that the Chinese owned 75 percent of Vietnam's 70 rice mills.[25] Correlated with this were the operation of commissaries and grocery stores and the function of moneylending between harvests.[26] Rice milling is the most important industry operated by the Chinese, but since the world depression in the 1930's it has not thrived as it did a decade earlier, when Cholon's factories alone produced 8,090 tons of white rice every 24 hours. In 1948 the Viet Minh sabotaged 11 of the Chinese rice mills. Since then many large rice mills have been replaced by smaller mills dispersed in more rural areas.

Textile Manufacturing. Second in importance to rice production is the manufacture of thread and cloth. In 1959, more than 600 textile workshops were engaged in spinning and weaving. However, until 1959 most manufacturers were small family businesses, and Vietnam lacked a large textile mill.[27] In July 1959, a Vietnamese-Chinese textile plant (VINATEXCO) was opened at Ba Quec in Gia Dinh Province. Built with private Chinese and Vietnamese capital and backed by a loan from the Industrial Development Center with the support of the American Aid Mission, the plant was scheduled to produce 10 tons of cotton yarn and 32,000 yards of fabric daily, satisfying one-quarter of the Republic of Vietnam's textile needs.[28]

Other Light Industries. The most important of these is the manufacturing of candles and incense sticks used as offerings in most religions. Also significant is the manufacturing of rubber, stone, clay, and glass products, and wooden ships, used mainly for transporting rice along the inland waterways. Food and associated industries include sugar refining in the areas of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Bien Hoa, Gia Dinh, Thu Dau Mot and Cholon; the making of fish, soya and bean sauces; rice flour noodles; soya bean cheese; confectionaries; and coconut and peanut oil.[29] There are many other small Chinese-operated industries too numerous to mention.

Nonmanufacturing Occupations. Retail trade is the most significant nonmanufacturing operation, for in 1959 it included 15 subcategories with 2,123 Chinese firms or authorized dealers (those having a Government franchise). The leading subcategory is no doubt the grocery, a combination of the American grocery, drug, and dime stores. Next in importance is the Chinese medicine shop which, in the absence of modern medical facilities, supplies the hinterland inhabitants with Chinese and Vietnamese medicinal herbs. The Chinese pharmacist is also called upon to diagnose and to treat patients in their homes. These two types of small businesses play a vital role in the domestic economy, for they are found in almost all areas, even the most remote. The nature of these businesses also seems to allow the Chinese to remain abreast of the ideas and activities of the populace.

Third in importance are rice shops and secondhand goods stalls, each of which had some 200 dealers in 1959.[30]

Wholesale businesses consist of 30 subcategories which include 1,856 firms. The most important of these is the import-export business; in 1959 there were 350 import-export firms, most of which had been in existence since mid-1955. Prior to the imposition of a margin deposit of 350,000 piasters, more than 20,000 such firms existed in Saigon-Cholon alone.[31]

That the scrap copper and iron business, mainly handled by the Fukienese, is of considerable importance is demonstrated by the recent shipment of 40,000 tons of iron scrap to Japan.

Next in importance is the bazaar trade, an expanded version of the grocery store. Textiles and agricultural products are equally important in the bazaars: in addition to rice and rubber, the latter category includes such surplus items as green beans, cattle hides, duck feathers, and dried fish. These items are also exported to Hong Kong and Singapore under a barter system.[32]

Transportation. Transportation, comprising six subcategories and 165 dealers, is mainly in Chinese hands. Most products are transported from Saigon to the interior and back, and from village to village, along highways.[33] In the Mekong Delta, however, transportation is principally by water, and the Chinese—private individuals, landowners, and shipping companies—own most of the junks and tugboats. The Chinese also own several small steamers (500 tons) which formerly sailed between Saigon and Haiphong, and Saigon and Da Nang. Since the Chinese have a monopoly in transportation, most farmers depend on them to carry their produce to market.[34]

Banking and Commercial Facilities. Five Chinese banks—one branch of the East Asia Bank, two of the China Bank, and two of the Bank of Communications—operate in the Saigon-Cholon area; in conformity with Government regulations, these banks give service to clients of all nationalities. Chinese pawnshops and moneylenders also play a significant role by extending credit to small firms and to members of the urban working classes and peasants.[35]

Service Industries. The Chinese firms or authorized dealers in both urban and rural areas totaled 15,748.[36]

Chinese Economic Organizations

The most significant and powerful Chinese business association is the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, whose apparent function is to further Chinese business interests. Originally organized in 1903, it was officially incorporated in 1910. Until 1959, the membership comprised representatives of the five congregations and the leadership rotated among the Cantonese, Fukienese, and Teochiu, who held five votes each. The Hakka and Hainanese, with only three votes each, were not permitted to assume leadership. Since 1959 the Chamber has been reorganized—to reduce the influence of the dialect groups—and members are now selected from the trade associations.[37]

There are 48 Chinese Trade Associations in the Republic of Vietnam, with a membership of 1,381 Chinese businesses—1960 figures. The leading concerns are the medical association, 75 firms; the jewelry association, 69 firms; and of lesser importance, the weaving association, 345 individual or family members; the teahouse association, 209 members; and the tailors' association, 200 members.[38]

Occupational Specialization by Dialect Group

Traditionally, each dialect group or congregation specialized in a particular field of economic activity. In this way, each group maintained a more or less self-supporting, independent economy. In general, the five groups may be characterized as follows:

1. The Cantonese or Kwong-fu. This group consists mainly of laborers; that is, persons engaged in railway construction; handicrafts, such as sauce making, brewery, copper and iron utensils; tanneries; gold- and silversmithing; shoemaking; laundry; cooking; painting; and various service industries, such as department stores, hotels, and theaters.[39]

2. The Fukienese or Hokkien. Although few in number—8 percent of the Chinese population in 1950 [40]—the Fukienese are the principal Chinese merchants (especially in rice) and are therefore generally the wealthiest.[41] Their secondary activities include shipbuilding (junks), shipping, motorcar repairs, bicycle supply, exchange houses, and banking. They operate rubber goods, sugar refining, coconut oil pressing, pineapple packing, and confectionery.[42]

3. The Teochiu. Especially concerned with good businesses, this

group deals particularly with the production of rice, raw fish, dried salt fish, pepper, and vegetables. Associated with these businesses are such enterprises as rice milling, market gardening, wine making, and tobacco growing.[43] Many Teochiu are also boatmen and cooks.[44]

4. The Hakka or Kheu. Like the Cantonese, the Hakka engage in handicrafts such as shoemaking, tailoring, gold- and silversmithing, and in such concerns as rice milling and iron founding. Some Hakka operate pawnshops and exchange houses, while others follow professions such as medicine and teaching. Few if any corporations are run by the Hakka group.[45] They are also farmers and workmen.[46]

5. The Hainanese or Hailam. Lowest on the economic and social scales, this group is primarily engaged in domestic service, small restaurant and teashop businesses, fishing, junk shipping, and factory and coolie labor.[47]

Trade With Other Groups

The Chinese have established a complex trading system which neither the Vietnamese nor the Europeans have succeeded in duplicating. The preeminence in trade which the overseas Chinese have attained is explained partially by their ability to mingle easily with the local inhabitants of their adopted countries, their willingness to speculate and to serve as intermediaries, and their elaborate system of mutual assistance. To understand the intricacies of Chinese commerce, it is necessary merely to examine the rice trade, which is characteristic of the Chinese business method.

Traditionally, Chinese rice merchants maintained rice mills to process the paddy for exporters. When they functioned in both capacities, they were called miller-exporters and were generally located in Cholon. The rice millers usually could not purchase paddy directly from the farmers, but had to use intermediaries or paddy merchants, who were organized into syndicates and who specialized in this phase of the trade. These merchants, operating through the intermediaries of agents and *ramasseurs* (literally gatherers or collectors), were also essential to most rice farmers, who needed them to provide transportation of their rice to the mill.[48]

The paddy merchants, situated in the urban areas, did not purchase the paddy themselves, but rather through their agents, located in the rice-growing districts and river ports, who in turn directed the activities of the ramasseurs. The agents, the second group of middlemen, often were also grocers. Occasionally large grocers avoided using the services of one middleman by purchasing paddy directly, transporting it to town themselves, and reselling it to the paddy merchants.

The agents, according to custom, dealt only with transactions of 10,000 *gia* (a Vietnamese measure equal to 40 liters). Their accountants handled business amounting to 5,000 to 10,000 gia; their subaccountants, quantities of 400 to 5,000 gia; transactions below 500 gia were handled by the ramasseurs.

The ramasseurs were actually in charge of buying the paddy in the village markets; in many cases the paddy had already been promised in payment of a loan made before the harvest.[49] The ramasseurs bought the paddy with capital provided by the agents, who in turn received credit from the urban wholesale merchant.[50]

The Chinese are frequently accused of usury, of exploiting the debt-ridden farmers, and of capitalizing on their improvidence. The Vietnamese generally do not save for the future, especially since the local Chinese grocer, known as Uncle, will nearly always give them credit, while at the same time securing rights on the crop.[51]

Recently these rice traders have been of positive assistance to the Vietnamese Government. In October 1965, the Government forces and the Communists were each preparing to seize the harvest, estimated at 220,000 tons, from the vicinity of Bac Lieu, an area mostly under Viet Cong domination. To prevent the Communists from getting the lion's share of the paddy, as they have been attempting to do each year, the Government sent out Chinese merchants to buy rice directly from the farmers. Because the Chinese are usually apolitical, they alone dare to enter such Communist-held areas without fear of reprisals. In addition to fanning out into the paddy areas, the Chinese reportedly maintain granaries in Bac Lieu which are dummy organizations designed to deceive the Communists.[52]

According to an earlier report—July 1965—Vietnamese resentment against the Chinese had increased because of a rise in the price of rice. The increase was attributed partly to Viet Cong interference with paddy shipments and partly to Chinese speculation. To curb speculation, Premier Nguyen Cao Ky threatened to shoot rice dealers convicted of hoarding and speculation.[53]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

For centuries the Chinese have played a dominant role in the economic activities of Vietnam while remaining politically separate. The Chinese lived in their own communities, operated their own trade-political associations, established and enforced their own laws, and considered themselves citizens of China.[1]

When the Chinese emigrated and settled in Vietnam, they grouped themselves, according to dialect or province of origin, into communities called bangs, which the state officially recognized in 1814. The leaders of these groups, *bang truong*, were chosen by the local authorities and were held responsible for the behavior of their people. The Chinese, at that time, enjoyed the same civil status as the Vietnamese and were subject neither to military service nor to the *corvee* (labor in lieu of taxes).[2] They could appeal to the local courts and own property, but they were not permitted to seek state employment.[3] The precolonial Annamese regime did not attempt to limit the economic and social position of the Chinese, but rather enabled them to function smoothly as a community separate from the Vietnamese.[4]

The French colonial regime, on the other hand, subjected the Chinese to a series of regulations in an effort to "establish and maintain an equilibrium between the Vietnamese and the Chinese."[5] They imposed heavy poll taxes on the Chinese and to curb Chinese immigration, required all citizens to carry identity cards, permits of circulation, and temporary passes.[6] The French also maintained a system, initiated by the Emperor of Annam, whereby immigrants were not permitted to settle in the country unless they were sponsored by the chief of a village or bang and had their names registered.[7]

The French continued the bangs (or congregations, as they called them), since these organizations provided an effective means to control the steadily multiplying Chinese population. They entrusted to the leaders of the congregations such functions as tax collection, immigration control, and the settling of disputes within the Chinese community. Eventually, the Chinese reacted against the powers of the congregation leaders, who they believed were collaborating with the French against the rest of the Chinese community; but Chinese protests went unheeded until 1930, when the government of China intervened in their behalf.[8]

Small concessions were gained in the Nanking Franco-Chinese agreement of 1935 when the Chinese were granted most-favored-nation privileges of travel and residence.[9] However, they were not allowed to own the most fertile red lands on which rubber and other export crops were cultivated.[10] In southern Annam, the Chinese were not permitted to lease the village fishing sites which were auctioned by the provincial governments each year.[11] Finally, they were still barred from employment in the colonial government.[12] The Franco-Chinese treaty of Chungking (1946), signed when China was one of the Big Four, granted the Chinese "tax status equal to that of Indochinese nationals and jural status equal to that of French nationals." [13]

The Franco-Chinese treaty of 1948 provided for modifications of the congregation system. To appease the Nationalist Chinese Government, which felt the congregations fostered the regional allegiance of the Chinese at the expense of loyalty to national China, the French renamed the congregations with the more anonymous term of Chinese Regional Administrative Groups; in addition, the Chinese consuls were given the right to veto the candidacy of Chinese for positions of leadership in the groups, although the colonial government retained the right of ultimate choice. These groups continued to provide their members with community and civil services such as schools, hospitals, and temples. The best temples and hospitals were maintained by the Cantonese group, the largest of the five.[14] The Chinese could now transfer from one association to another at will. Furthermore, the Chinese were allowed free movement, free trade, acquisition of property, fishing in territorial waters, and participation in the coastal trade in navigable waters. The traditional Chinese personal and family status was retained; placed under the jurisdiction of French tribunals, they were allowed to own property in common. The Chinese were, however, subject to an oppressive fiscal policy, which forced them to pay a special personal capital tax, a measure aimed at excluding all but the economic elite from the country.[15] In effect, the Chinese were to be treated as a separate national group within the country.[16] They were in a unique position, for they had no contact with local authorities except through their own elected leaders. As a semiautonomous group, the Chinese developed no other loyalties than those to their own congregations and ultimately to their native country.[17] Moreover, their position enabled them to gain control of certain branches of the economy when they were granted extra-territorial concessions.[18]

When he came to power, Ngo Dinh Diem saw the status of the

Chinese as incompatible with the sovereignty of an independent state. To eliminate the privileged status of the Chinese and to integrate them into the Vietnamese body politic, Diem promulgated Ordinance No. 48 on August 21, 1956, which provided that all Chinese born in Vietnam were automatically granted Vietnamese citizenship.* Those refusing to accept were to be deported to Formosa. The Sino-Vietnamese (Minh Huong), however, were ineligible for repatriation.[20]

Significantly, the decree was retroactive: all Chinese born in the country in the past, an estimated 500,000, suddenly discovered they were required to assume a new citizenship.[21] The old alien-identification cards of Chinese born in Vietnam were confiscated, and new cards were issued attesting their Vietnamese citizenship.[22]

The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vietnam issued a communique which called the decree: ". . . a privilege that most countries deny foreigners born on their territory or at least grant under exacting conditions. . . . It should also be added that it is hardly conceivable that an important foreign colony can live and prosper in a state on the fringes of the national community without sharing the obligations which normally fall on its members. . . ." [23] In conjunction with his efforts to integrate the Chinese into the community, Diem issued a second decree two weeks later which banned foreigners from 11 professions.†

As anticipated, the Chinese reacted strongly to these measures, saying they were allowed no free choice. They appealed to the Consul General of Nationalist China to intervene in their behalf. The Vietnamese Government rejected China's requests.[24]

By August 1957, the third of the "final" deadlines, less than 80,000 to 100,000 Chinese had registered for naturalization. Over 50,000 Chinese had applied for evacuation when the Vietnamese authorities suddenly closed the registration list on July 19, 1957. At that time only 3,000 Chinese had actually completed the formalities for departure; these were airlifted to Taiwan in August.[25]

Meanwhile, the Chinese retaliated with economic reprisals, severely affecting the Vietnamese economy. The Government finally agreed to a compromise whereby the Chinese could continue their important role in the economy, provided they were willing to join the national community. The official abolition of the congregations in 1960 marked, at least formally, the end of the social and legal separateness of the Chinese community. The sudden requirement of Vietnamese citizenship for the Chinese, however, did not necessarily assure their loyalty and cooperation as citizens.[26]

---

* According to one source the decree, formulated in December 1955, granted Vietnamese citizenship to all Chinese born in Vietnam who had one parent also born in Vietnam.[19]

† See "Economic Organization," p. 986.

As of 1961, according to some sources, the Chinese were beginning to accept their new status.[27] This was partially explained by the new policy of the Chinese Nationalist Government which urged Chinese nationals in Southeast Asia to become loyal citizens of their countries of residence.

Political Consciousness and Opinion

The political consciousness and opinions of the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam are by no means homogeneous. Many Chinese are concerned solely with earning a living and are apolitical, except for political acts affecting them directly. However, the educated Chinese and the uneducated merchants take a very real interest in politics. The latter are anxious to enjoy the wealth they have amassed and are likely to support any policy which will assure this.[28]

Outwardly, most Chinese favor Nationalist China, mainly because Taiwan has the only Chinese diplomatic mission in the country. However, beneath the surface, Chinese political opinions are both diverse and ambivalent. The Chinese press, comprising seven publications, is almost wholly pro-Kuomintang and vehemently anti-Communist. In the past, this attitude was one of necessity and expressed fear rather than conviction; a newspaper showing independence or propagating the Communist line was immediately suppressed.[29]

The average Chinese is believed to be a neutralist with pro-Peking, but not necessarily pro-Communist, leanings. His ties are naturally with mainland China, the motherland and the home of his kin. This feeling is, of course, stronger in those residents born in China than in the local-born Chinese. The Chinese also admires Communist China for rising from its chaotic, backward state to its present position as a great power.[30]

Moreover, the Chinese realize that it would be advantageous for them to have the support of a strong China. Since Taiwan was unable to alleviate their plight in 1956, many Chinese hope that Communist China will be able to protect them in the future. Some Chinese express the feeling that a powerful China would have made certain that they retained their privileged status in Vietnam.[31] Yet the Communist ideology and way of life are anathema to the Chinese businessman, who is a capitalist in the fullest sense of the word.[32] Being both practical and prudent, many Chinese have elected to follow an ambivalent course, espousing neither communism nor democracy, until the outcome of the struggle between the two ideologies becomes more certain. Meanwhile, they will continue openly to back Taiwan while they follow the development of Communist China's power with great interest.[33]

The one form of political activity which has always appealed to the Chinese is the secret society. One of the most powerful has been the Triad (Heaven and Earth) Society, founded in southern China in the 18th century for the purpose of overthrowing the Manchus. These societies later became mutual aid associations, relying on veiled threats, blackmail, and intimidation to influence the local government. Imported to Southeast Asian countries by immigrants from Kwangtung and Fukien Provinces, these societies became national institutions.[34] By their very nature, these organizations remain cloaked in mystery. Members are obliged to make solemn vows of brotherhood, to learn secret codes, and to obey the laws of the organization and the commands of their leaders.[35] Since some of these societies, such as the Triad, maintain killer squads who specialize in murder and blackmail, strict discipline is generally maintained. The Dai Viet, Vietnam's closest equivalent to the Western political party, originally included a number of Triad members and employed a secret initiation ceremony, as well as a branch which functioned like the Triad killer squads.[36]

The powerful, active Triad gained control of Singapore, attempted to take Bangkok, and spread through Vietnam via Ha Tien Province which had been leased to the society. At one time the Triad in the Republic of Vietnam included thousands of Vietnamese as well as Chinese. Indeed, since political dissension was suppressed, anyone having political aspirations was obliged to belong to such a society. The Triad has played an influential role in politics and has been implicated, under various guises, in several rebellions. Many lay Buddhists fear that the militant Buddhist movement is, in fact, more Triad than Buddhist.[37] Diem outlawed all secret societies, but the clandestine nature of their organization and activities permits them to continue covert operation.[38]

Subversive Influences

Peking and the NFLSV have been working to win the allegiance and support of the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam in several ways. Press releases and radio broadcasts (the Liberation Radio broadcasts two programs in Chinese every day [39]) carry daily propaganda messages to the Chinese community. Front organizations, such as the China-Vietnam Friendship Association, periodically issue statements congratulating the NFLSV on their victories.[40] Propaganda has ranged from subtle persuasion to blatantly communistic appeals.

The Chinese newspapers express vehemently anti-Communist and consistently pro-United States and pro-Nationalist China views. However, these attitudes may not accurately reflect the opinions of the majority of the Chinese residing in the Republic of Vietnam. Experience, prudence, and concern for their own self-interest have taught the Chinese not to commit themselves publicly until the victor is apparent.

However, one small group of Chinese led by Father Augustin Nguyen Lac Hoa, a refugee Chinese Roman Catholic priest and former officer in the Chinese National Army, has been actively engaged in fighting the Viet Cong in the Haiyen sector of the Camau Peninsula for more than 6 years. In July 1965, these "Sea Swallows," as they call themselves, numbered over 1,000 armed men.[41] Father Hoa's small army is composed mainly of Chinese recruited from Cholon, but one company of Vietnamese and a detachment of Nung—a refugee tribal group from Southern China who are excellent warriors—joined the group during the summer of 1965. These troops patrol an area 15 miles square known as Haiyen and maintain, according to one source, the "best grass-roots intelligence network anywhere in Vietnam." [42]

Despite the fact that Father Hoa has been internationally acclaimed as a symbol of resistance, the status of the priest and his army is ambivalent. Most of the Saigon Government is opposed to the idea of allowing a private army to operate freely in the country. Moreover, Father Hoa is suspect for other reasons: he is Catholic, a former protege of Ngo Dinh Diem, he is Chinese, and he is a colonel turned priest. In an effort to integrate this army into the body politic, the Government appointed a Vietnamese National Army major as commander of the Haiyen sector, the position held —de facto—by Father Hoa.[43]

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Since the Chinese live primarily in urban areas, they have access to radios, newspapers and other printed matter, and movies, all of which provide important means for disseminating information. However, no figures are available concerning the number of Chinese who actually own radios, attend movies, and read newspapers.

Estimates of the literacy rate among the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam are unavailable at this writing. One 1950 source suggests that the literacy rate for the Chinese in Indochina was lower than that for any other Chinese community in Southeast Asia.[1] By 1960, according to another source, every province of the Republic of Vietnam had at least one Chinese school.[2] Considering the emphasis the Chinese place on education—they are generally willing to make large sacrifices so that their children may attend school—it is reasonable to assume that by now Chinese literacy is at least as high as that of the Vietnamese.[3]

In 1962 the Liberation Broadcasting Station was broadcasting in Cantonese on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, and in Teochiu on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. In that year, the Voice of America was broadcasting 66.5 hours weekly in various Chinese dialects.[4]

Of all the minority language newspapers, Chinese papers have the widest circulation. As of October 29, 1965, the 14 Chinese newspapers in Cholon were amalgamated into seven, including five dailies and two evening papers, as shown below:

Kien Quoc and *Quoc Te* became *Kien Quoc Quoc te*
Thang Cong and *Dai Ha* became *Thang Cong*
Yuan Tung and *Sun Yueh* became *Yuan Tung*
Ah Chau and *Van Quoc* became *Ah Chau Van Quoc*
Luan Zan Moi and *Tieng Phong* became *Luan Zan Moi*
Viet Hoa and *Shin Shun* became *Viet Hoa*
Sun Wun and *Dien Dan* became *Sun Wun*

Before publication, a Chinese employee of the Vietnamese Government censors the news to be printed in these papers. The news is either slanted in favor of the United States and Nationalist China or it is completely innocuous. International news is received from AP and UPI, while local news is reprinted from Vietnamese papers.

The NFLSV maintains the Liberation Press Agency which issues special communiques to the Chinese community to encourage them to oppose the Saigon Government.[5]

The United States Information Service maintains a small collection of books and periodicals in Chinese at its information centers in Saigon, Hue, and surrounding areas. They also distribute, for a fee, a Chinese-language periodical, *World Today*, published weekly in Manila.[6] Consideration might be given to providing more educational material in the Chinese language to Chinese students. In 1959, a dearth of free or inexpensive textbooks in Chinese was reported. It was feared that unless Nationalist China or the United States could print textbooks in Chinese, the Chinese community would be forced to accept propaganda-filled books from Communist China, who was all too eager to smuggle them into the country.[7]

With their penchant for dramatization, the Chinese have taken readily to movies, when they can afford them.[8] In 1960, there were 177 motion picture theaters in the Republic of Vietnam, 61 of which were in Saigon. The showing of free films in Chinese might serve as an excellent means for attracting the Chinese to information sessions.[9]

Word-of-mouth communication is extremely important for disseminating information. The Chinese are naturally gregarious and love to gossip together in the local teashops. Storytelling minstrels often circulate among the teashops to entertain customers with their narratives, some of which may be factual.[10] News and gossip are generated by Chinese merchants who fan out into the provinces to collect rice and other produce from the peasants. Every village is said to have its Chinese shopkeeper and often a Chinese pharmacist as well, who are able to glean and pass along information obtained through their dealings with the local people.

Esthetics

Music and drama form an integral part of Chinese life, in addition to providing opportunities for self-expression. Music accompanies worship—Buddhism has its own compositions—funeral processions, festivals, and theatrical performances. The Chinese are fond of singing, frequently accompanying themselves on various types of instruments, such as drums, flutes, reeds, various stringed instruments, metal bells, and resonant stones. The theatre has been an effective agency for popular education; for everyone, literate and illiterate, can see a play and learn something from it. Dramatic performances have been presented in temples, at fairs, in the fields, and in theaters, principally as forms of diversion.[11] Dancing, except in theatrical performances and in some religious ceremonies, is alien to the Chinese. European-style dancing, where men and women are in close physical contact, is considered vulgar and shocking, especially by the older, less Westernized Chinese.[12]

Chinese literature is the oldest in the world, dating from 2500 B.C. It includes the classics *(ching)* or canonical works of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, historical writings, philosophical works, poetry, drama, and fiction. Traditionally, in China anyone desiring to enter government service was required to pass an examination to test his knowledge of the classics—the guides for human behavior and morality. The Chinese still have the highest respect for scholars versed in Chinese literature. Traditionally, temples were built to the God of Literature and offerings were made to him before a birth to assure the family of an intelligent child.

Symbols and Colors

The Chinese place great emphasis on symbols and colors. The peony, for example, represents love, affection, feminine beauty, and spring. Chinese families often watch the peony to determine their fortune. A flower with full petals is an emblem of good fortune, while dry, faded flowers signify imminent poverty.[13] The lotus flower symbolizes purity and summer. Frequently used as an emblem, the shape of the lotus flower is likened to the Buddhist Wheel of Life: the seed pod, blossom, and bud represent the past, present, and future; and the leaves and roots, offspring and steadfastness in the family.[14] Of all the line symbols, the Pa Kua (eight trigrams) is the most common.* Each color has a distinct meaning: for example, red signifies happiness; white symbolizes mourning.

---

* See "Custom and Taboos," p. 964.

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

Any civic action program designed to improve urban conditions would probably interest the Chinese community. Such programs might include health improvement through rat control, vaccination, water purification, and education in modern medical practices; an increase in low-cost housing facilities; and the construction of more and better schools. The Chinese are, on the whole, anxious to improve their lot and would probably welcome assistance. But the Chinese are extremely proud, a factor which must be taken into account.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. N. A. Simoniya, *Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia — A Russian Study*, translated by U.S. Joint Publications Research Service (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, December 1961), p. 7.
2. "Call to Chinese Residents," *The New York Times*, June 16, 1965, p. 6, col. 5; Seymour Topping, "Peking Pressing Overseas Chinese," *The New York Times*, July 10, 1965, p. 3, col. 2.
3. Col. Frank O. Blake, Interview, December 1965 [Former Chief of Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Saigon].
4. Bernard B. Fall, "Commentary: Bernard B. Fall on Father de Jaegher," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959), p. 116.
5. William G. Skinner, *Report on the Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, December 1950), p. 80.
6. Nguyen Quoc Dinh, *Les Congrégations chinoises en Indochine française*, translated by Claude Reed for Human Relations Area Files (Paris: Librairie de Recueil Sirey, 1941), pp. 41–42.
7. Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 217; Olov Robert Thure Janse, *The Peoples of French Indochina*, Smithsonian Institution War Background Series, No. 19 (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, June 1944), p. 18.
8. Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
9. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), p. 254.
10. Bernard B. Fall, "Le Problème de l'administration des minorités ethniques au Cambodge, au Laos et dans les deux zones du Viet-Nam" (Paris: Cinquième Congrès Mondial, September 1961), p. 10.
11. Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
12. Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
13. Simoniya, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
14. George L. Harris, *et al.*, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962), p. 77.
15. Shalini Pradhan, "Chinese in South-east Asia," *United Asia*, XV, 1 (January 1963), p. 33.
16. Blake, *op. cit.*

II. BACKGROUND

1. Douglas P. Murray, "Chinese Education in South-East Asia," *The China Quarterly*, XX (October-December 1964), p. 67; C. P. Fitzgerald, "Overseas Chinese in South East Asia,"

Australian Journal of Politics and History, VIII, 1 (May 1962), p. 68.

2. Simoniya, *op. cit.,* pp. 7–8.
3. William G. Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 69.
4. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 213; Skinner, *Chinese Society, op. cit.,* p. 69.
5. Simoniya, *op. cit.,* p. 7.
6. R. A. D. Forrest, *The Chinese Language* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1948), p. 220.
7. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1942), Part I, pp. 32–37; "China," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Vol. V (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965), p. 574.
8. Purcell, *op. cit.,* pp. 673–74; Paul K. Benedict, "Languages and Literatures of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly,* VI, 4 (August 1947), p. 383.
9. Skinner, *Chinese Society, op. cit.,* p. 67.
10. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 69.
11. Forrest, *op. cit.,* p. 220.
12. *Ibid.,* p. 221.
13. Purcell, *op. cit.,* pp. 674–75.
14. Skinner, *Chinese Society, op. cit.,* p. 69.
15. Latourette, *op. cit.,* Part I, pp. 37–40.
16. *Ibid., Part II,* pp. 165–66.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Joseph Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), p. 92.
19. Simoniya, *op. cit.,* p. 9.
20. Joseph Buttinger, "The Ethnic Minorities in the Republic of Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence,* edited by Wesley R. Fishel (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 113.
21. Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon, op. cit.,* p. 92.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. Wesley R. Fishel, "Problems of Democratic Growth in Free Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence,* edited by Wesley R. Fishel (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961) p. 13.
25. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 221.
26. Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon, op. cit.,* pp. 153–57.
27. *Ibid.,* p. 135.
28. Lê Thánh Khôi, *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et civilisation* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955), p. 54.
29. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 221; Father Raymond V. De Jaegher, "The Chinese in Viet-Nam," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years,* edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959), p. 107; Simoniya, *op. cit.,* p. 12.
30. De Jaegher, *op. cit.,* p. 107.
31. Purcell, *op. cit.,* pp. 221–23.
32. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," *op. cit.,* p. 114.
33. Simoniya, *op. cit.,* pp. 12–13.
34. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 211.
35. De Jaegher, *op. cit.,* p. 108.

36. M. Verdeille, "Édits de Minh-Mang concernant les Chinois de Cochinchine" (Introduction by P. Midan), *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* VIII, 4 (1933), p. 8.
37. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 232.
38. *Ibid.,* p. 216.
39. *Ibid.,* p. 217.
40. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 59.
41. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 56.
42. *Ibid.,*
43. *Ibid.,* p. 57.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Bernard B. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *Far Eastern Survey,* XXVII, 5 (April 1958), p. 65.
46. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 60.
47. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 699.
48. Blake, *op. cit.;* Bernard B. Fall, "Commentary," *op. cit.,* p. 115.
49. Blake, *op. cit.*
50. Gontran de Poncins, *From a Chinese City,* translated by Bernard Frechtman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 94.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 54.
2. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 656.
3. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 177.
4. Darby, *op. cit.,* p. 115.
5. V. R. Burkhardt, *Chinese Creeds and Customs* (Hong Kong: The South China Morning Post, Ltd., 1956), p. 140.
6. Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Village in Vietnam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 119.
7. Poncins, *op. cit.,* pp. 51–52.
8. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 183.
9. Ly Y Ming, "The Chinese in Vietnam," *Viet-My,* V, 3 (August 1960), p. 14.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *op. cit.*
12. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 186.
13. Fitzgerald, *op. cit.,* p. 71; Poncins, *op. cit.,* pp. 178–80.
14. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," *op. cit.,* p. 114; Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.,* p. 12.
15. Harris, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 60.
16. P. Huard and A. Bigot, "Les Caractéristiques anthropo-biologiques des Indochinois," *Travaux de l'Institut Anatomique de l'École Supérieure de Médecine de l'Indochine,* IV (1938), pp. 28, 41.
17. Purcell, *op. cit.,* p. 656.
18. Poncins, *op. cit.,* p. 169.
19. Fall, "Commentary," *op. cit.,* p. 113.
20. Richard J. Coughlin, *Double Identity: The Chinese in Modern Thailand* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), p. 78.
21. Latourette, *op. cit.,* Part II, p. 195.
22. *Ibid.,* Part II, p. 223.

23. Skinner, *Chinese Society, op. cit.*, p. 315.
24. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
25. Skinner, *Chinese Society, op. cit.*, p. 315.
26. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 50; Harris, *et al., op. cit.*, p. 60.
27. Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 30, 38.

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 182–83.
2. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
3. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 83.
4. *Ibid.*, Part II, pp. 182–83.
5. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–40.
7. Nguyen Quoc Dinh, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–26.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–27.
9. Harris, *et al., op. cit.*, p. 60.
10. Francis L. K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Chinese Culture and Personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 58.
11. H. Y. Feng, "Teknonymy as a Formative Factor in the Chinese Kinship System," *American Anthropologist*, XXXVIII (1936), pp. 56–60.
12. A. L. Kroeber, "Process in the Chinese Kinship System," *American Anthropologist*, XXXV (1933), pp. 151–52.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 153–54.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
16. Hsu, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
17. Blake, *op. cit.*
18. Huard and Bigot, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
19. Blake, *op. cit.*
20. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 216.
21. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 196–98.
22. T. S. Chen and J. K. Shryock, "Chinese Relationship Terms," *American Anthropologist*, XXXIV (1932), p. 630.
23. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 198.
24. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–74.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 198.
27. Ta Chen, *Emigrant Communities in South China: A Study of Overseas Migration and Its Influence on Standards of Living and Social Change*, edited by Bruno Lasker (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), p. 132.
28. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–72.
29. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 188–89.
30. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
31. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–75.
32. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 189–91.
35. Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 124–25.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–76.
38. Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
39. Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

40. Elon E. Hildreth, "The Challenge in Education," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years: An International Symposium*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959), p. 156.
41. Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
42. Thompson and Adloff, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
43. Lois Mitchison, *The Overseas Chinese: A Background Book* (Chester Springs, Pa.: Dufour Editions, 1961), p. 69.
44. Skinner, *Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
45. Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 84; Hildreth, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
46. Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
47. Hildreth, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
48. Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
49. Edgar N. Pike, "Problems of Education in Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence*, edited by Wesley R. Fishel (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 96.
50. Murray, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–94.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 84–85.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 94–95.
55. Hildreth, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–57.
56. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
63. Maria Leach (ed.), *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1949–1950), p. 225.
64. *Poncins*, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–36.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Ta Chen, *op. cit.*, pp. 132–34.

V. CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

1. Blake, *op. cit.*
2. Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–19.
3. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 66; Part II, p. 262.
4. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
5. Latourette, Part II, pp. 164–65.
6. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
7. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 165.
8. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 167.
9. Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
10. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 168.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
13. *Ibid.*; Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 168.
14. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 168.
15. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 169; Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
16. Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–22.
17. Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 169–70.
19. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 33; Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 214–15.
20. Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–17, 169; Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 49; Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 214–15.
21. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 215–24.
22. Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–220.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 168, 170.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 8, 121, 162, 166.
28. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 211–12.
29. "China," *op. cit.*, pp. 575, 581.
30. Blake, *op. cit.*
31. Mitchison, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
32. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950), p. 65.
33. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 208–209.
34. *Ibid.*, Part II, pp. 209–211.
35. *Ibid.*, Part II, pp. 212–13.
36. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 214.
37. Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
38. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 214–15.

VI. RELIGION

1. "Taoism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXI (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965), p. 797.
2. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 124–30.
3. "China," *op. cit.*, p. 569.
4. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 144.
5. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
6. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 148.
7. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–103.
8. "China," *op. cit.*, p. 569.
9. L. H. Dudley Buxton, *China: The Land and the People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), pp. 176–77.
10. "Taoism," *op. cit.*, p. 796; Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 159.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 162.
13. "Taoism," *op. cit.*, p. 797.
14. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 161.
15. C. P. Fitzgerald, *China: A Short Cultural History* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), p. 269.
16. "Taoism," *op. cit.*, p. 797.
17. Fitzgerald, *China*, pp. 273–74.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 159–60.
20. "China," *op. cit.*, p. 569.
21. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 133.
22. "Confucianism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. VI (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965), pp. 308–309.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. Gustave Dumoutier, *Les Cultes annamites*, translated by Mr.

Thompson for Human Relations Area Files (Hanoi: H. F. Schneider, 1907), pp. 1–2.

27. *News From Vietnam,* VI (1960), pp. 18–20.
28. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
29. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 154–55.
30. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 150.
31. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 96–97.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 94–96.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 106–107; Burkhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
35. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 224.
36. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 225.
37. Coughlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–109.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–110.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–13.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
43. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 124–30.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Tsung To Way, "Overseas Chinese in Vietnam," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XXIV, 1 (January 2, 1958), p. 20.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," *op. cit.*, p. 110.
5. Alice Tay Erh Soon, "The Chinese in South-East Asia," *Race*, IV, 1 (November 1962), p. 35.
6. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," *op. cit.*, p. 121.
7. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 67.
8. Tay Erh Soon, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
9. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 68.
10. Fall, "Commentary," *op. cit.*, p. 113.
11. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," p. 110; Tay Erh Soon, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
12. Fall, "Commentary," *op. cit.*, p. 114.
13. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 68.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," *op. cit.*, p. 111.
18. Tay Erh Soon, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
19. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 71.
20. Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
21. Etienne Dennery, *Asia's Teeming Millions and Its Problems for the West* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), p. 137.
22. Mitchison, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
23. Skinner, *Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
24. Simoniya, *op. cit.*, p. 72; Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
25. Tsung To Way, "A Survey of Chinese Occupations," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years*, edited by Richard W. Lindholm (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959), p. 118.
26. Leonard Unger, "The Chinese in Southeast Asia," *The Geographical Review*, XXXIV (1944), p. 215.

27. Tsung To Way, "A Survey," *op. cit.*, pp. 118–20.
28. "New Vietnamese-Chinese Textile Plant Producing One Fourth of Local Needs," *News From Vietnam*, VI, 12 (November 30, 1960), pp. 11–12.
29. Tsung To Way, "A Survey," *op. cit.*, p. 118; Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–12.
30. Tsung To Way, "Overseas Chinese," *op. cit.*, p. 122.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Tsung To Way, "A Survey," *op. cit.*, p. 122.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Tsung To Way, "A Survey," *op. cit.*, p. 123.
35. Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Tsung To Way, "A Survey," *op. cit.*, p. 123.
36. Tsung To Way, "A Survey," *op. cit.*, pp. 123–24.
37. Ly Y Ming, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
39. N. Uchida, "Economic Activities of the Chinese in Southeast Asia," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XXI, 19 (November 8, 1956), p. 591.
40. Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 699.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 656.
42. Uchida, *op. cit.*, p. 591.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Skinner, *Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
45. Uchida, *op. cit.*, p. 592.
46. Skinner, *Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
47. Uchida, *op. cit.*, p. 592.
48. Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
51. Dennery, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–44.
52. Takashi Oka, "Vietnam Harvesttime: Rice Crop—Key Target," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 30, 1965, p. 16.
53. Topping, *op. cit.*, p. 3, col. 2.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. De Jaegher, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
2. Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
3. Harley Farnsworth MacNair, *The Chinese Abroad: Their Position and Protection: A Study in International Law and Relations* (Shanghai, China: The Commercial Press, Ltd., 1924), p. 151.
4. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," *op. cit.*, p. 115.
5. MacNair, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
6. Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Skinner, *Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
10. Ta Chen, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
11. Gustave Langrand, *Vie sociale et religieuse en Annam: Monographie d'un village de la côte Sud-Annam* (Lille: Éditions Univers, 1945), pp. 33–34.
12. Ta Chen, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
13. Skinner, *Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

15. Purcell, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–31.
16. De Jaegher, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
17. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 66.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
19. Blake, *op. cit.*
20. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 66.
21. "Chinoiseries in South Vietnam," *The Economist*, CLXXX (July-September 1956), p. 1064.
22. Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 67.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
24. De Jaegher, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
25. Fall, "Commentary," *op. cit.*, pp. 115–16.
26. Buttinger, "Ethnic Minorities," *op. cit.*, pp. 111–12.
27. *Ibid.;* Fall, "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *op. cit.*, p. 72.
28. Skinner, *Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
31. Fall, "Commentary," *op. cit.*, p. 117.
32. Mitchison, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
33. Fitzgerald, "Overseas Chinese," *op. cit.*, pp. 76–77.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
35. Latourette, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 200.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benedict, Paul K. "Languages and Literatures of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, VI, 4 (August 1947), 379–89.

Blake, Col. Frank O. Interview. December 1965. [Former Chief of Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Saigon.]

Boudet, M. Paul. "La conquête de la Cochinchine par les Nguyen et le rôle des émigrés Chinois," *Bulletin de L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLII (1942), 115–32.

"Buddhism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. IV. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965, 354–61.

Burkhardt, V. R. *Chinese Creeds and Customs.* Hong Kong: The South China Morning Post, Ltd., 1956.

Buttinger, Joseph. "The Ethnic Minorities in the Republic of Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* Edited by Wesley R. Fishel. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, 99–121.

———. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Buxton, L. H. Dudley. *China: The Land and the People.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929.

"Call to Chinese Residents," *The New York Times*, June 16, 1965, p. 6, col. 5.

Carver, George A., Jr. "The Real Revolution in South Viet-Nam," *Foreign Affairs*, XLIII, 3 (April 1965), 387–408.

Chen, T. S. and Shryock, J. K. "Chinese Relationship Terms," *American Anthropologist*, XXXIV (1932), 623–64.

"China," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. V. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965, 555–611.

"Chinoiseries in South Vietnam," *The Economist*, CLXXX (July-September 1965), 1064.

"Confucianism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. VI. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965, 305–12.

Coughlin, Richard J. *Double Identity: The Chinese in Modern Thailand.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960.

Coulet, Georges. *Les Sociétés Secretes en Terre d'Annam.* Saigon: Imprimerie Commerciale C. Ardin, 1926.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

De Jaegher, Father Raymond J. "The Chinese in Viet-Nam," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 107–17.

Dennery, Etienne. *Asia's Teeming Millions and Its Problems for the West.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1931.

Donnell, John C. "National Renovation Campaigns in Vietnam," *Pacific Affairs*, XXXII, 1 (March 1959), 73–88.

Dumoutier, Gustave. *Les Cultes annamites.* Translated by Mr. Thompson for Human Relations Area Files. Hanoi: H. F. Schneider, 1907.

Fall, Bernard B. "Commentary: Bernard B. Fall on Father De Jaegher," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 111–17.

———. "Le Problème de l'administration des minorités ethniques au Cambodge, au Laos et dans les deux zones du Viet-Nam." Paris: Cinquième Congrès Mondial, September 1961.

———. "South Viet-Nam's Internal Problems," *Pacific Affairs,* XXXI, 3 (September 1958), 241–60.

———. "Viet-Nam's Chinese Problem," *Far Eastern Survey,* XXVII, 5 (April 1958), 65–72.

Feng, H. Y. "Teknonymy as a Formative Factor in the Chinese Kinship System," *American Anthropologist,* XXXVIII (1936), 56–66.

Fishel, Wesley R. (ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Fitzgerald, C. P. *China: A Short Cultural History.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961.

———. "Overseas Chinese in South East Asia," *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* VIII, 1 (May 1962), 66–77.

Forrest, R. A. D. *The Chinese Language.* London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1948.

Greene, Katherine R. C. "Repatriating China's Expatriates," *Far Eastern Survey,* XVII, 4 (February 25, 1958), 44–47.

Groslier, Bernard Philippe. "Une enquête démographique et sociale sur un quartier de Saigon-Cholon," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXIX (1954), 5–19.

Hammer, Ellen J. *The Emergence of Viet Nam.* New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1947.

———. *Indochina.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

Harris, George, L., *et al. U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Harrison, Brian. *South-East Asia: A Short History.* London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1960.

Hickey, Gerald Cannon. *Village in Vietnam.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.

Hildreth, Elon E. "The Challenge in Education," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 143–61.

Hsu, Francis L. K. *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Chinese Culture and Personality.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.

Huard, P. and Bigot, A. "Les Caractéristiques anthropo-biologiques des Indochinois," *Travaux de L'Institut Anatomique de L'École Supérieure de Médecine de L'Indochine,* IV (1938), 1–225.

Janse, Olov Robert Thure. *The Peoples of French Indochina.* Smithsonian Institution War Background Series, No. 19. Washington, D. C.: The Smithsonian Institution, June 1944.

Kroeber, A. L. "Process in the Chinese Kinship System," *American Anthropologist,* XXXV (1933), 151–57.

Langrand, Gustave. *Vie sociale et religieuse en Annam: Monographie d'un village de la côte Sud-Annam.* Lille: Éditions Univers, 1945.

Lasker, Bruno. *Peoples of Southeast Asia.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945.

Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *The Chinese: Their History and Culture.* New York: The MacMillan Company, 1942.

Leach, Maria (ed.). *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend.* New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1949–1950.

Lê Thánh Khôi. *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et civilisation.* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955.

Liberation Radio report in Vietnamese, 1000 GMT, May 28, 1965 on the NFLSV Central Committee Presidium release of letter, May 24, 1965.

Lindholm, Richard W. (ed.). *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years.* East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959.

Ly Y Ming. "The Chinese in Vietnam," *Viet-My*, V, 3 (August 1960), 10–14.

MacNair, Harley Farnsworth. *The Chinese Abroad: Their Position and Protection: A Study in International Law and Relations.* Shanghai, China: The Commercial Press, Ltd., 1924.

Madrolle, Claudius. *Indochine du Sud: Cochinchine, Cambodge, Bas-Laos, Sud-Annam, Siam.* Paris: Société d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, Challamel, 1939.

Maffre, John. "Viet Critics Fail to End Priest's Private Army," *The Washington Post*, July 25, 1965, A–14.

Mitchison, Lois. *The Overseas Chinese: A Background Book.* Chester Springs, Pa.: Dufour Editions, 1961.

Murray, Douglas P. "Chinese Education in South-East Asia," *The China Quarterly*, 20 (October-December 1964), 67–95.

"A New Look at Vietnam," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XXXV, 2 (January 11, 1962), 47–51.

News From Vietnam, VI (1960).

"New Vietnamese-Chinese Textile Plant Producing One Fourth of Local Needs," *News From Vietnam*, VI, 12 (November 30, 1960), 11–12.

Nguyen Quoc Dinh. *Les congrégations chinoises en Indochine française.* Translated by Claude Reed for Human Relations Area Files. Paris: Librairie de Recueil Sirey, 1941.

Nguyen Van Thanh. *A Survey of Vietnamese Occupational Prestige and Aspiration.* Saigon: Michigan State University, Vietnam Advisory Group, May 1962.

Oka, Takashi. "Vietnam Harvesttime: Rice Crop—Key Target," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 30, 1965, 16.

Pike, Edgar N. "Problems of Education in Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence,* Edited by Wesley R. Fishel. New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, 75–97.

———. "Public and Private Education in Vietnam," *Asian Culture,* V, 2 (April-June, 1960), 79–116.

Poncins, Gontran de. *From a Chinese City.* Translated by Bernard Frechtman. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957.

Pradhan, Shalini. "Chinese in South-East Asia," *United Asia,* XV, 1 (January 1963), 31–34.

Purcell, Victor. *The Chinese in Southeast Asia.* London: Oxford University Press, 1951.

——. "Overseas Chinese and the People's Republic," *Far Eastern Survey,* XIX, 19 (November 8, 1950), 194–96.

———. *The Position of the Chinese in Southeast Asia.* New York: Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950.

Robequain, Charles. *L'Indochine française.* Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1935.

Skinner, G. William. *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957.

———. "Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* CCCXXI (1959), 136–47.

———. *Report on the Chinese in Southeast Asia.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, December 1950.

Simoniya, N. A. *Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia—A Russian Study.* Translated by U.S. Joint Publications Research Service. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, December 1961.

Ta Chen. *Emigrant Communities in South China: A Study of Overseas Migration and Its Influence on Standards of Living and Social Change,* Edited by Bruno Lasker. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940.

"Taoism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Vol. XXI. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965, 796–97.

Tay Erh Soon, Alice. "The Chinese in South-East Asia," *Race,* IV, 1 (November 1962), 34–48.

Thompson, Virginia. *French Indo-China.* New York: MacMillan, 1937.

———. *Labor Problems in Southeast Asia.* New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1947.

Thompson, Virginia and Adloff, Richard. *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia.* New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950.

———. *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955.

Topping, Seymour. "Peking Pressing Overseas Chinese," *The New York Times,* July 10, 1965, p. 3, col. 2.

Tsung To Way. "Overseas Chinese in Vietnam," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* XXIV, 1 (January 2, 1958), 20–22.

———. "A Survey of Chinese Occupations," *Viet-Nam: The First Five Years,* Edited by Richard W. Lindholm. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1959, 118–25.

Uchida, N. "Economic Activities of the Chinese in Southeast Asia," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* XXI, 19 (November 8, 1956), 890–98.

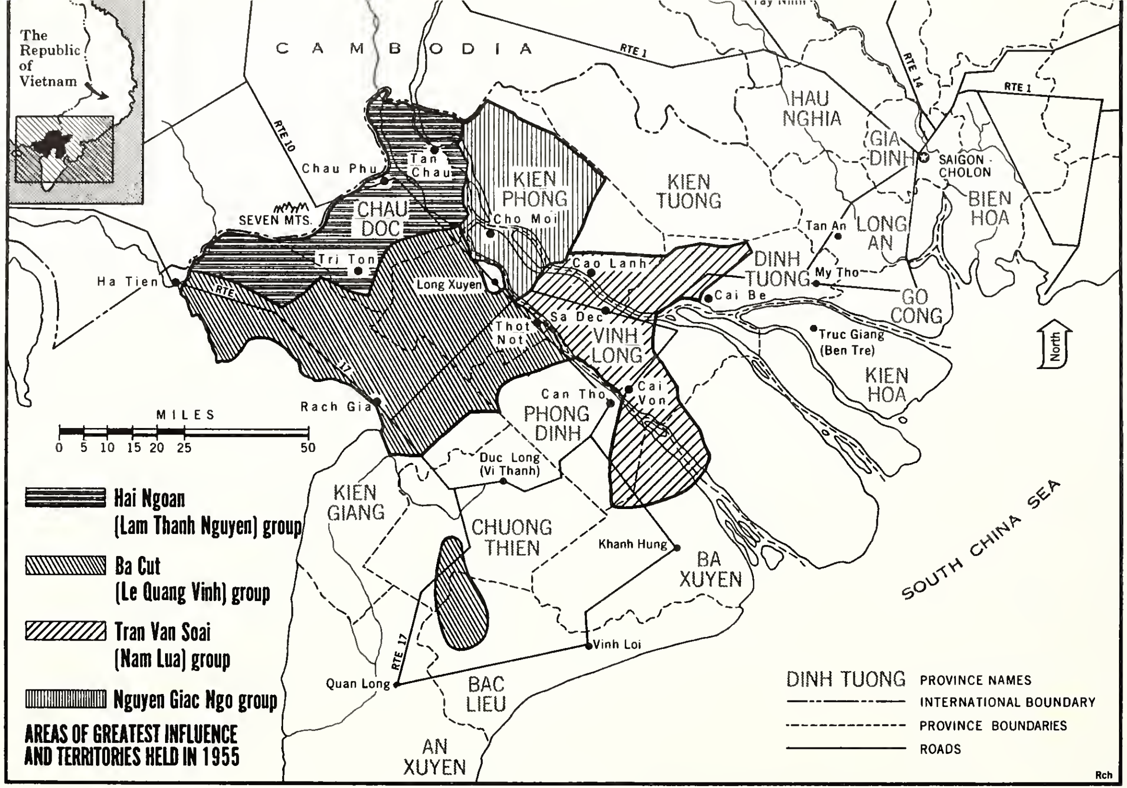
Unger, Leonard. "The Chinese in Southeast Asia," *The Geographical Review,* XXXIV (1944), 196–217.

Verdeille, M. "Edits de Minh-Mang concernant les Chinois de Cochinchine," (Introduction by P. Midan), *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* VIII, 4 (1933), 3–25.

"Vietnam," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Vol. XXIII. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965, 145–47.

Vietnamese News Agency, International Service, Press Releases in English, Hanoi, October 14, 1965; November 16, 1965; and December 21, 1965.

Warner, Denis. "Vietnam's Militant Buddhists," *The Reporter,* XXX, 10 (December 3, 1964), 29–31.


The Republic of Vietnam
CAMBODIA
RTE 1
RTE 10
RTE 14
RTE 17
RTE
Chau Phu
Tan Chau
SEVEN MTS.
CHAU DOC
Tri Ton
Ha Tien
KIEN PHONG
Cho Moi
KIEN TUONG
HAU NGHIA
GIA DINH
SAIGON - CHOLON
BIEN HOA
Tan An
LONG AN
DINH TUONG
My Tho
GO CONG
Cai Be
Cao Lanh
Long Xuyen
Sa Dec
Thot Not
VINH LONG
Truc Giang (Ben Tre)
KIEN HOA
North
Cai Von
Can Tho
PHONG DINH
Rach Gia
Duc Long (Vi Thanh)
KIEN GIANG
CHUONG THIEN
Khanh Hung
BA XUYEN
Vinh Loi
Quan Long
BAC LIEU
AN XUYEN
SOUTH CHINA SEA
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
Hai Ngoan (Lam Thanh Nguyen) group
Ba Cut (Le Quang Vinh) group
Tran Van Soai (Nam Lua) group
Nguyen Giac Ngo group
AREAS OF GREATEST INFLUENCE AND TERRITORIES HELD IN 1955
DINH TUONG PROVINCE NAMES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
Rch

The Hoa Hao

CHAPTER 23. THE HOA HAO

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Hoa Hao,* a militant sect and a variant of Hinayana Buddhism, was founded in 1939 by Huyen Phu So, a mystic from Hoa Hao village in An Giang Province.† So rapidly acquired a vast following of ethnic Vietnamese due to the simplicity of the reformed Buddhist doctrine he expounded. By 1940 the movement had taken on a clearly political—almost fanatically nationalistic—orientation. Alarmed by So's increasing power, the French attempted to curtail the activities of the Hoa Hao leader. So, in response to the French controls, went to the Japanese for assistance. Hoping to exploit So's influence for their own ends, the Japanese armed the Hoa Hao. Organized into small armed bands, the sect acquired a widespread reputation for terrorism, banditry, and murder, simultaneously gaining control of much territory.

After the defeat of the Japanese, the Hoa Hao collaborated with the Viet Minh against the French until 1947, when the Communists murdered So. Whereas the sect had been united by their almost single-minded devotion to their leader, So's murder split the Hoa Hao into several dissident groups, the most notorious of which was led by Ba Cut, the last Hoa Hao leader to be defeated by Ngo Dinh Diem in 1956.

After 1947 the Hoa Hao at least nominally supported the French against the Viet Minh in return for French arms and official recognition as a religious sect. Benefiting from the anarchy rampant throughout the countryside, as well as from their French weapons and training, Hoa Hao private armies carved out larger and larger territorial holdings. By the time Ngo Dinh Diem became Prime Minister under Bao Dai in June 1954, the Hoa Hao had reached their peak of influence. They controlled most of the territory south and west of Saigon, maintained private armies, collected taxes, and claimed a following of over a million.

Soon after assuming the post of Prime Minister, Diem initiated a campaign against the militant religious sects in an effort either to destroy them or to integrate them into the body politic. However, in the Vietnamese National Army crisis of September 1954, the Hoa Hao backed Army Chief of Staff Gen. Nguyen Van Hinh when Diem attempted to force Hinh's resignation. To smooth over the crisis, Diem was obliged to appoint Hoa Hao members to serve in his cabinet, a sufficient indication of the powerful influence of the sect. Shortly thereafter, with the termination of French subsidies to the Hoa Hao, the sect was forced to support, at least nominally, the government of Diem. Ba Cut, however, refused to submit to the new government and remained at large.

---

* Pronounced WAH HOW. The full name of the sect is Phat Giao Hoa Hao.

† Chau Doc Province, established in October 1964, consists of five districts formerly within An Giang Province, including Tan Chan District in which Hoa Hao village is located.

Meanwhile, in the countryside, the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects were fighting over land vacated by the Viet Minh. On March 5, 1955, the two sects signed a nonaggression pact and, with the Binh Xuyen, formed the United Front of National Forces, a coalition which requested Bao Dai to dismiss Diem and demanded the Prime Minister to liberalize the regime. Diem refused to comply with the request and renewed his determination to fight the sects to the finish. By June 1955 Diem had destroyed the power of the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai, as well as the quasi-military group called the Binh Xuyen. Until the overthrow of Diem in the coup of November 1963, the Hoa Hao were politically and militarily impotent.

Since Diem's overthrow, however, successive governments have sought to conciliate the Hoa Hao in order to benefit from its influence over much of the Vietnamese peasantry. For the same reasons, the Communists have attempted to infiltrate the sect.

SECTION II

EARLY HISTORY AND STATUS DURING WORLD WAR II

The Hoa Hao sect was founded in 1939 by Huyen Phu So, the son of the president of the Council of Notables in Hoa Hao village in what was then An Giang Province (now Chau Doc). Born in 1919, So was infirm and languorous throughout his youth and seemed destined to lead an uneventful life. Hoping to cure his son's illness, So's father entrusted him to the care of Thay Xom, a Buddhist monk specializing in acupuncture (the practice of puncturing the body to cure disease or relieve pain), who was living in seclusion at Nui Cam in the Seven Mountains.[1] In the course of this confinement with Thay Xom, So was instructed in the principles of sorcery, hypnotism, Buddhist philosophy, and the works of Nguyen Van Quyen (better known as Phat Thay Tay An or Phat Tay), a Buddhist monk who preached in Cochin China during the reign of Minh Mang (1820–41). When Thay Xom died, So, still sickly, returned to his village, where he resumed his monotonous life. Suddenly, during a stormy night in 1939, he awakened in a state of nervous excitement, prostrated himself before the family altar, and discoursed for hours on the principles of Buddhist doctrine, finally declaring himself the apostle of Phat Tay charged with preaching a reformed Buddhism.

When So's health was immediately restored, the witnesses of this miracle became the first converts to Hoa Haoism.[2] The simplicity of the Hoa Hao doctrine and cult held great appeal for those accustomed to practicing a religion placing heavy economic demands upon its adherents.[3] So believed that the absence of a sacerdotal hierarchy, temples, and statues permitted the faithful to practice their religion at any place and at any time, thus promoting the establishment of a more profound communion between themselves and the Almighty.[4] In So's own words, "The cult must stem much more from internal faith than from a pompous appearance. It is better to pray with a pure heart before the family altar than to perform gaudy ceremonies in a pagoda, clad in the robes of an unworthy bonze."[5]

So's gift of prophecy broadened his appeal even further. Long before their occurrence, So predicted such events as the defeat of the French, the occupation by the Japanese, and the arrival of the Americans.[6] Word of So's miraculous cure and religious mission spread rapidly. By the end of 1939, Hoa Haoism counted several thousand followers; an unknown number of others hastened to the village of Hoa Hao to see the apostle of Phat Tay, whose memory they still revered. In the minds of the peasants, So assumed supernatural qualities by curing the sick with acupuncture and herbal medicines, preaching the new doctrine, and foretelling the future.[7] In March 1940, So retired once more to Nui Cam, where he wrote his famous "Sam Gian" (oracles, prayers). Within a few months after his return, So had a following of more than 100,000 and had acquired the name of Dao Khung, or Mad Bonze, because of his hypnotic gaze.[8]

With the German conquest of France in June 1940, So's preaching acquired political aspects; he toured the countryside preaching the new religious doctrine while clearly displaying anti-French sentiments. So's converts, rapidly increasing in number, began calling him Phat Song, or Living Buddha.

When the French were sufficiently alarmed by So's activities and prophecies, they exiled him from his native village to My Tho and Cai Be. In these areas he acquired thousands of new converts, causing the French to confine him in a psychiatric hospital in Cholon in August 1940. When he succeeded in converting the psychiatrist in whose charge he had been placed, So was declared sane and in May 1941 was exiled to Bac Lieu (now called Vinh Loi). By now Hoa Hao followers considered So a martyr and made pilgrimages to see him. Hoping to terminate So's influence once and for all, the French colonial administration decided to exile the Hoa Hao leader to Laos.[9] The Japanese, believing they could exploit So's popularity to establish a nationalist regime in Cochin China, intervened in October 1942 and induced his release and return to Saigon as a protege of the Kempeitai (the Japanese military police).[10]

Supplied with Japanese arms, the Hoa Hao began preparing openly for an armed conquest of the western part of Cochin China. In this period the sect acquired a reputation for banditry and murder. By early 1944, the Hoa Hao had created armed bands in anticipation of seizing power at the opportune moment. During the Japanese occupation, the Phat Giao Lien Hiep Hoi (United Association of the Buddhist Religion) was founded. Its territorial committees were linked to a Central Committee of Saigon, headed by Huyen Phu So and Le Cong Bo, another Hoa Hao leader.* Meanwhile Hoa Hao followers, called the Dao Xen, were terrorizing the countryside.[12] The leaders of the Dao Xen were Tran Van Soai

---

* Le Cong Bo was previously a wealthy landowner from Chau Doc Province. Believing he could benefit from So's popularity, he began to accompany the Hoa Hao leader on his proselytizing expeditions. Bo eventually became one of So's assistants.[11]

(also known as Nam Lua) and Hai Ngoan (also known as Lam Thanh Nguyen). By the end of the Japanese occupation in August 1945, Huyen Phu So and his Dao Xen controlled most of the territory south and west of Saigon[13] and the village of Can Tho became the Hoa Hao capital.

With the Japanese surrender, the Hoa Hao joined other nationalist groups in forming the United National Front to assume administrative functions from the Japanese. The Viet Minh, who had been consolidating their position during the Japanese occupation, represented themselves as a strong resistance movement enjoying Allied support and persuaded the Front to accept their leadership. On August 25, 1945, an independence demonstration took place in which practically every organized group participated.[14]

Differences between the Hoa Hao and the Viet Minh soon developed; armed clashes occurred in the countryside, culminating in a massacre in Can Tho on September 8, 1945. A band of 15,000 Hoa Hao bearing pikes and knives marched on Can Tho, where well-armed Viet Minh were garrisoned. In the ensuing clash, thousands of Hoa Hao died, and So's brother and Tran Van Soai's son were executed along with other Hoa Hao leaders; So and Hai Ngoan escaped. The return of the British and the French prevented further killings. Subsequently, however, the Hoa Hao, under Soai's command, wreaked vengeance by tying captured Viet Minh in bundles and drowning them in the rivers. An uneasy balance of power finally developed between the Viet Minh and the Hoa Hao in the delta region.

Seeking once more to unite the nationalist groups which they had begun to alienate, the Viet Minh attempted to establish a National Unified Front of all anti-French groups. At the same time, however, the armed forces of the Hoa Hao grouped themselves under Tran Van Soai and took the name of Ngia Quan Cach Mang Ve Quoc Lien Doi Nguyen Trung Truc (translation unavailable). This Hoa Hao group also initiated operations against the French Expeditionary Corps. The National Unified Front was dissolved by the Viet Minh in July 1946 when it became evident that the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai would not accept Viet Minh leadership.

At this juncture, Huyen Phu So decided to enter politics publicly as the leader of an independent political movement.[15] On September 21, So, aided by Nguyen Van Sam, created the Dan Chu Xa Hoi Dang or Vietnam Social Democratic Party (known by the shortened name of Dan Xa) in an effort to reunite all nationalist groups existing before the Japanese defeat. The Dan Xa Party, which was identified with So's Hoa Hao movement, was both anti-Communist and anti-French.*

---

* After So's death, because the Hoa Hao divided into several factions, the Dan Xa lost much of its influence. While the party continued to exist, it did not represent a united Hoa Hao movement.

Meanwhile, the Viet Minh named Huyen Phu So Special Commissioner of the Executive Committee of the Nam Bo.† Despite this appointment, relations between the Viet Minh and Hoa Hao were becoming increasingly strained. Memories of the 1945–46 massacres were still vivid and contributed heavily to the prevalent feeling of mutual distrust. Additionally, the separatist tendencies of the Hoa Hao were beginning to alarm the Communists. By December 1946 the Dan Xa showed evidence of becoming more anti-Communist than anti-French; So, fearing his life threatened by the Viet Minh, fled to Duc Hoa.[16]

---

†The Nam Bo was the Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam set up by the Viet Minh. The Nam Bo had nine members, six of whom were Communists.

SECTION III

STATUS DURING THE INDOCHINA WAR

In March 1947, Tran Van Soai (alias Nam Lua), following the example of the Cao Dai, joined the French, bringing with him his wife * and 2,000 armed followers. Soai established headquarters at Cai Von, the terminus of the ferry across the Bassac River to Can Tho and an important location for boats carrying rice to the Saigon-Cholon area. The following month, Huyen Phu So, en route to a "conciliation meeting" to which he had been invited by the Viet Minh, was ambushed by the Communists and condemned to death. So's detention caused the rest of the Hoa Hao to turn against the Viet Minh and to support the French. When the Communists murdered So in Long Xuyen, the assassination was hushed up; although the Hoa Hao chieftains knew of So's death, the faithful followers were informed that their leader had withdrawn and would return at a future date.[1]

On May 18, the French Command signed a military convention with Tran Van Soai (on whom had been conferred the nonexistent rank of a one-star general) whereby the latter would collaborate with local authorities to evict the Viet Minh from the Hoa Hao zones.[2] These negotiations placed the Hoa Hao in a seemingly ideal position. Having received official recognition as a religious sect, they were free to engage in their cult ceremonies; supplied with French weapons, they could now defend themselves against Viet Minh reprisals.

Soai and his well-trained army embarked on an all-out campaign against the Viet Minh. The areas they cleared of Communists were called Mat Tran Hoa Hao or Hoa Hao Front. Members of the Hoa Hao still inhabiting Viet Minh-controlled areas soon fled to the cleared zones, thus enlarging and consolidating the quasi-feudal domains of the Hoa Hao.[3]

However, the strength and cohesion of the Hoa Hao movement had emanated from the devotion of the faithful to Huyen Phu So. The news of the death of their spiritual leader and the absence of

---

* Soai's wife, Le Thi Gam, encouraged her husband to assume nominal command of the Hoa Hao armed forces after their divergence from the Communists. She commanded a Hoa Hao Amazon Corps and intelligence service, controlled the sect's budget, and occasionally arranged for the assassination of her husband's rivals.

a successor created personal rivalry among the Hoa Hao chieftains. Lacking strong religious unity, various military leaders allowed their personal ambitions to prevail; they soon challenged Soai's position as commander in chief of the Hoa Hao.

The first to sever relations with Soai was his own former second-in-command, Hai Ngoan, a Sino-Vietnamese whose fief was centered in Chau Doc Province. Hai Ngoan opened hostilities by attacking French units as well as all boats trespassing on his domain. In retaliation the French, in January 1948, induced Soai to initiate operations against Hai Ngoan.[4]

Another military leader, Ba Cut (alias Le Quang Vinh) with headquarters in Thot Not, chose to exploit this intrasect rift by attacking Soai and seizing land at the expense of the other chiefs. Motivated by no particular loyalty, Ba Cut fought alternately against the Viet Minh, the French, the Vietnamese Government, and other Hoa Hao groups.

A third leader, Nguyen Giac Ngo, onetime commander of the sect forces and overlord of the Cho Moi region in what is now An Giang Province, chose to remain neutral in the ensuing conflicts, forming a peaceful splinter faction called the "Lying-down Hoa Hao." Of all the leaders, Ngo alone remained faithful to the spiritual tenets of the sect.[5]

Soai's popularity with the sect leaders declined further when his negotiations with the Cao Dai Ho Phap,* whom the Hoa Hao distrusted intensely, were revealed. In January 1948 Soai and the Ho Phap signed a mutual nonaggression pact which promised support to Bao Dai.† The French reluctantly approved the pact, which aimed at unity and independence for Vietnam. (In fact, after the agreement was signed, the French appended the words "within the framework of the French union." [6]) Fearing that the interests of the sect had been compromised, the Hoa Hao political party, the Dan Xa, encouraged desertions and provoked internal rebellions. When operations against the dissident Hai Ngoan were renewed with the assistance of a French liaison mission, Soai ended his negotiations with the Ho Phap. Several dissident leaders, including Ba Cut, were disarmed; as a result, they joined the French, at least temporarily.[7]

However, the Hoa Hao solidarity was shortlived: by the end of 1948, the Hoa Hao were once more operating as several distinct groups. So's father, Huong Ca Bo, designated to assume spiritual leadership of the sect until his son's "return," joined with Nguyen Giac Ngo in attempting to organize a Hoa Hao "Third Force." Ba Cut also resumed his guerrilla activities. Further jealousies developed when the French, who had selected Soai as the leader of the Hoa Hao, began delivering arms exclusively to him, and when Bao Dai appointed So's father as a member of his Privy Council.[8]

---

* The Ho Phap is the highest office in the Cao Dai administrative hierarchy.

† Despite this alliance, however, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao continued to clash, offering neither strong nor dependable support to Bao Dai.

In February 1949, Hai Ngoan—and his private army of 500—renewed his alliance with Soai. By June, Soai, with Ngoan's assistance, had recovered a measure of his former influence, and Cai Von was now recognized as the capital of the Hoa Hao country. Meanwhile Nguyen Giac Ngo and Ba Cut were fighting each other in the region of Cho Moi.

Soai's efforts to unify the sect were again thwarted in 1950 when Nguyen Giac Ngo negotiated a direct alliance with Bao Dai's government. On February 25, 1950, Ngo made a declaration of submission to Bao Dai, but Soai ordered the occupation of Ngo's fief in an attempt to keep it in Hoa Hao hands. The French later induced Soai to relinquish control of Ngo's area, and an agreement to this effect was signed in April 1950. Subsequently, Soai continually tried to regain this area.[9] On August 25, 1950, Ba Cut, now in control of the region of Thot Not between Can Tho and Long Xuyen, rallied directly to the French Command. Meanwhile, Hai Ngoan severed relations with Soai and returned to the Chau Doc region with the rank of colonel. Once again the sect, numbering over a million followers, was divided into four factions, each jealous of its independence. Whatever unity remained could be ascribed to the religious precepts of the sect, represented by Huyen Phu So's father, who was now leading the life of an ascetic and engaging in charitable activities. Eventually, So's father rallied to Soai, thus providing a degree of unity for the sect.[10]

On January 1, 1953, the French promoted Tran Van Soai to the rank of division general in recognition of his loyalty to the regime. Shortly thereafter, it became evident that the Vietnamese authorities, on the heels of the Franco-Vietnamese accords, were extending their sphere of influence by transferring territory to the Vietnamese National Army. Seeing their privileges and autonomy threatened, and knowing that weakness lay in disunity, the sect leaders—with the exception of Nguyen Giac Ngo—agreed to put aside their personal disputes and reunite under the leadership of Huyen Phu So's father.

The Vietnamese National Army on June 1, 1953, seized the provinces of Dinh Tuong and Vinh Long, initiating a series of clashes between the sects and the Army. In protest, on the night of June 25, Ba Cut and his troops deserted after burning buildings in their charge and seizing all available weapons. To stabilize the deteriorating situation, the Vietnamese authorities called a meeting on July 29 to evolve a method to reach an accord with the Hoa Hao leaders before transferring the provinces of Long Xuyen (now part of An Giang Province) and Chau Doc and part of Vinh Long Province to the government's civil administrators.[11]

Meanwhile, the Viet Minh reversed its policy of hostility toward the Hoa Hao to a policy of professed friendship. By curtailing the military operations hitherto directed against the Hoa Hao, the Viet Minh hoped to exploit the sect's greatest fears—the loss of its autonomy and local economic control—and to turn the Hoa Hao leaders against the Franco-Vietnamese authorities. Although the Hoa Hao hatred of the Viet Minh had not diminished, their desire to safeguard their sovereignty in the face of government interference was, at this time, of more immediate concern. By mid-1953 it seemed possible that the Hoa Hao might accept the extended hand of the Viet Minh.

On July 3, 1953, the French Government issued a declaration of its readiness to grant complete independence to Vietnam, provided that the latter settled its claims in the economic, judicial, military, and political spheres. Already displeased with Bao Dai's conduct of affairs, the various nationalist groups foresaw the negotiations ending without regard for their interests. Since the groups were too divided to defend their interests, Ngo Dinh Nhu grasped this opportunity to organize an unofficial Front of National Union to promote the candidacy of his brother Ngo Dinh Diem for the premiership and to show how united the Vietnamese were in their demands for national independence. Among the leaders supporting this project were the Catholic Apostolic Vicar of Vinh Long; Pham Cong Tac (the Cao Dai Ho Phap); Le Van Vien (the Binh Xuyen leader); and Tran Van Soai. The national congress in support of national union and peace met semiclandestinely on September 5. The congress was forced to break up when the delegates began indicting the French authorities and Bao Dai. Although Soai and Vien later wired expressions of loyalty to Bao Dai, the damage had already been done.

Hoping to smooth over the impression of popular discontent created by the unofficial congress, Bao Dai called an official National Congress in October. The Hoa Hao were allotted 15 seats (in addition, 17 were given to the Cao Dai and 9 to the Binh Xuyen), more than the number reserved for the professional groups, the Buddhists, or the ethnic minorities. The purpose of the National Congress was merely to inform Bao Dai of the desires of the Vietnamese people in regard to future relations with France "within the framework of the French Union" and to elect representatives to assist him in the negotiations. Instead, the feverishly nationalistic delegates approved a motion (later amended) in support of "total independence for Vietnam." [12]

At the signing of the Geneva Agreement, the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Binh Xuyen controlled over half of southern Vietnam. The Hoa Hao fiefs represented extremely profitable economic entities. Soai, for example, as director of his own rice-marketing corporation, controlled much of the rice industry in the Bassac River area.[13] Soai would buy paddy from the farmers at below market prices, store it until prices were high at the end of the season, then sell it for vast profits.* Like the Binh Xuyen, the Hoa Hao also derived huge profits from the operation of gambling concessions or from protection money exacted from the operators of these establishments.[15] Hoa Hao administrative committees called Ban Tri Su governed the faithful; Bao An or self-defense groups ensured the public security in Hoa Hao territories. Various other Hoa Hao chieftains collected taxes, directed land reform programs, and rendered justice. By the end of 1954, the Hoa Hao armed forces, charged with extending the Hoa Hao domain and warding off the Viet Minh, were officially estimated at 12,500,† however, if those of the Bao An are included, these forces may have exceeded twice this number. Hoa Hao followers numbered over a million; they were influential in the provinces of Chau Doc, Long Xuyen (now part of An Giang), where they made up the majority population), and Vinh Long, and the regions near the towns of Rach Gia, Ben Tre (now Truc Giang), My Tho, and Bac Lieu (now Vinh Loi). The Hoa Hao would not relinquish so vast a claim without a struggle.[17]

---

* At the end of August 1953, when rice was priced far above normal in Saigon, Hai Ngoan was holding 20,000 tons, and Soai, who had already sold 12,000 tons, was reserving 40,000 tons for future sales.[14]

† According to one source, the Hoa Hao armed forces were divided as follows: Tran Van Soai, 7,000; Hai Ngoan, 2,600; Nguyen Giac Ngo, 1,500; Le Quang Vinh, 1,000; and Ba Ga Mo or Vo Va Dieu, 400.[16]

SECTION IV

STATUS DURING THE DIEM REGIME

The anticipated clash between the Vietnamese Government and the religious sects began on September 11, 1954, when Ngo Dinh Diem (then Prime Minister under Bao Dai), ordered the resignation of the Army Chief of Staff, Gen Nguyen Van Hinh, whom he suspected of disloyalty. Hinh refused to step down; instead he barricaded himself with tanks in his headquarters. Diem, fearing a coup d'etat, withdrew into his palace, which was protected by Binh Xuyen police. For weeks, anarchy prevailed throughout Vietnam; Diem was powerless. Supported by the sects, who believed that a strong army linked to Diem would spell their own demise, Hinh could easily have executed a coup d'etat; however, he chose to temporize while showing his defiance of the Prime Minister.

On September 16, the sect leaders met to determine the policy to adopt for the deteriorating situation. In a manifesto drawn up during this conclave, the sects declared their opposition to Diem and their support for a democratic and representative government, "capable of reforming the regime, liberating the country from foreign domination, and improving the lot of the people by the enactment of measures to combat the prevalent poverty and illiteracy." [1] Seeking to appease Hinh, Diem appointed Hinh's friend Gen. Nguyen Van Xuan to the Ministry of National Defense. Hinh, pleased with the appointment, agreed to postpone immediate action against the regime. In addition, when it became known that a military coup d'etat would automatically end foreign economic and military aid, the general was finally dissuaded from undermining Diem's government.[2]

Bao Dai, who had been following the preceding events with growing concern, summoned the Binh Xuyen leader, Le Van Vien, and charged him with the task of forming a coalition government with the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao leaders who had signed the manifesto. Negotiations for the coalition broke down when the Cao Dai leader and Tran Van Soai stipulated terms unacceptable to Le Van Vien. The Binh Xuyen leader then accused the other two leaders of selling out to Diem. Indeed, 5 days later the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao each accepted 4 seats in Diem's new government. The Hoa Hao's Tran Van Soai became Diem's Minister of State. Thus, Diem succeeded in avoiding the conflict—at least temporarily. The Cao Dai and Hoa Hao joined the Diem government because they needed a source of money for the wages of their private troops, a force necessary to retain control over their feudal fiefs. Although members of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao held important positions in the government, the loyalty of the sects was far from assured,[3] because the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao leaders were accepting the positions largely to insure their own control in certain territories.

When the French terminated their subsidies to the religious sects early in 1955, Diem's Information Minister announced that the sect armies—25,000 Cao Dai and 20,000 Hoa Hao *—would be integrated into the National Army.† [5] Heretofore, the sectarian troops had been autonomous auxiliaries in the French Expeditionary Corps. Unable to support their troops without the subsidies, the sect leaders had the choice of either awaiting the desertion of their unpaid troops or forming a government more sympathetic to their needs.

On January 14, 1955, Soai's chief of staff Nguyen Van Hue and Maj. Nguyen Than Day (alias Tu Day) joined Diem, bringing with them 3,500 and 1,500 men, respectively.[7] By the end of February, Nguyen Giac Ngo also supported Diem. Ba Cut, who refused to join Diem, had withdrawn (for the fifth time since 1947) into the Ca Mau region with his 3,000 ‡ followers, precipitating a clash between Hoa Hao irregulars and units of the Vietnamese National Army. The latter launched an abortive attack—Operation Écaille—against Ba Cut to reduce his power. The failure of the operation was ascribed to the rebel leader's receiving details of the plan in advance, presumably from Soai, a member of the National Defense Committee. In retaliation, Ba Cut attacked a government battalion near Long Xuyen.[9] A few months later, Ba Cut's troops had increased to approximately 5,000 and, with the help of the Hoa Hao cabinet ministers, were well equipped with arms. Indeed, rumor was rife that Soai himself had urged Ba Cut to defect, suggesting that the Hoa Hao forces be united under his command.[10]

Meanwhile, there was chaos throughout the southwestern Vietnamese countryside. The Viet Minh had retreated, leaving behind a power vacuum in the Plaine des Joncs and the Transbassac region. Rivalry for control of this territory resulted in repeated clashes between the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai. The Hoa Hao had the distinct advantage, since Ba Cut and his troops were already firmly entrenched in the area. Despite the anarchy in the region, govern-

---

* *The New York Times* (September 25, 1954) estimated the Hoa Hao military forces at between 20,000 and 30,000, including regulars and irregulars.[4]

† In the same announcement, the minister called the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao officers good fighters, implying criticism of the National Army officers.[6]

‡ One source claims Ba Cut had 1,000 followers.[8]

ment troops began to occupy the Ca Mau Peninsula, and Diem visited the area officially on the 19th of February.

Bao Dai, concerned that hostilities would weaken the sects, forcing them to yield to Diem's demands, sent his cousin to Saigon to persuade the sects to unite. Accordingly, on March 5, 1955, the sects and the Binh Xuyen gang signed a nonaggression pact and formed a United Front of National Forces, a loose coalition designed to "protect the country and serve the people." [11] The sects and the Binh Xuyen also agreed to merge their troops * into one national army (no reference was made to the existing National Army) after a government of national union had been formed and to continue their allegiance to Bao Dai. Officially headed by the Cao Dai Ho Phap (Pham Cong Tac), the Front demanded a strong, democratic government composed of honest men, with extensive power for the sects; in addition, the Front sent a mission to Bao Dai requesting the dismissal of Diem. However, Bao Dai reaffirmed his support of Diem.

Prior to receiving Bao Dai's reply, the Front leaders (including Tran Van Soai and Ba Cut for the Hoa Hao) sent Diem an ultimatum on March 21, 1955, allowing him 5 days to form a national union government. Refusing to accede, Diem on March 25 invited the Front leaders to discuss their grievances with him. † On March 26, the four Hoa Hao and four Cao Dai ministers resigned from Diem's cabinet. Now the Front made a second proposal requesting the transfer of executive power from Diem to a five-man council in which Diem would be merely a member. Again Diem refused to comply.

Factionalism within the sects prevented the immediate outbreak of hostilities. The Hoa Hao, who controlled the ferries and river traffic, expressed their disapproval by merely blocking the food supplies bound for Saigon-Cholon. The Binh Xuyen entrenched themselves in various buildings, commandeered in anticipation of a confrontation with the Vietnamese National Army.[13] Shortly before the conflict, the Cao Dai and the smaller Hoa Hao groups, accusing the Binh Xuyen of drawing them into a showdown with Diem, withdrew from the impending clash.[14] Fighting broke out March 28, when Diem ordered his troops to attack the Security Service building occupied by the Binh Xuyen. The French intervened, claiming that the lives of French citizens were being endangered. Hostilities between the Binh Xuyen and the government forces were resumed on the night of March 29, resulting in

---

* According to *The New York Times* (March 5, 1955), these troops would include 16,000 Cao Dai, 5,000 Hoa Hao, and 4,000 Binh Xuyen regulars.[12]

† It is interesting to note that 8 months after Diem assumed power the sects and the Binh Xuyen still controlled over half of southern Vietnam.

some casualties on both sides. Again the French arranged a cease-fire, much to Diem's annoyance. The Prime Minister accused the French of giving tactical advice to the Binh Xuyen, especially since the French had refused to supply the Vietnamese National Army with fuel and ammunition. Following the cease-fire, a junta composed of Diem, his brothers Ngo Dinh Nhu and Ngo Dinh Luyen, and their nephew by marriage, Tran Trung Dung, assumed the leadership of Vietnam.[15]

During their negotiations as a United Front the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Binh Xuyen had maintained a semblance of unity. However, by the end of March, the latent factionalism characteristic of the sects was once more evident. Gen. Nguyen Thanh Phuong, Cao Dai commander in chief and an unenthusiastic participant in the coalition, joined Diem's junta, agreeing to integrate his troops into the Vietnamese National Army.[16] Encouraged by this triumph, Diem now tried to isolate the Binh Xuyen by gaining the support of the Hoa Hao through bribery. The Hoa Hao leaders Soai, Ba Cut, and Hai Ngoan refused the bribe of 100 million piastres, in the name of the United Front.[17]

Throughout the month of April fighting either prevailed or appeared imminent both in the countryside and in Saigon itself. From the southwestern part of Vietnam came reports of clashes between the Hoa Hao dissidents and government forces.* At the same time, negotiations were in progress between Hoa Hao Gen. Hai Ngoan and government officials. The Diem junta was attempting to persuade the general, who was believed to be only halfheartedly supporting the sect's opposition to the regime, to join them.[20] At the end of April, fighting raged between the government troops and the Binh Xuyen until resistance of the Binh Xuyen was broken, and the group was evicted from the Saigon-Cholon area.[21]

Having driven the Binh Xuyen out of the twin cities, the Diem junta renewed its efforts to reduce the power of the Hoa Hao. Government officials again offered a considerable sum of money to Tran Van Soai for his support. However, having anticipated this move, the Hoa Hao leaders had already agreed not to accept bribes, at least openly, and to resist the government at all costs. When the sect learned of an impending government military operation against them, the Hoa Hao set fire to their huts and stores, abandoned their bases, and on May 25 withdrew to the countryside. The anticipated offensive occurred on June 5, 1955, when units of the army, commanded by Duong Van Minh, staged an amphibious attack on Hoa Hao forces in the Can Tho area. The attack resulted in the surrender of five Hoa Hao battalions and in Nguyen Giac Ngo's joining the government.[22]

---

* On April 3, government troops launched an attack on Hoa Hao rebels commanded by Ba Cut in the My Tho area.[18]

The New York Times (April 7, 1955) reported the near capture of Ba Cut by government forces. A 100-man commando team surrounded the rebel leader's camp and took 20 prisoners but failed to snare Ba Cut, who escaped by motorized skiff.[19]

Meanwhile, Tran Van Soai had moved his headquarters from Cai Von to the Seven Mountains, where Hai Ngoan had food and war supplies to meet the emergency. On May 29, 1955, Soai and Ngoan announced their readiness to surrender, but by then Diem was prepared to eliminate the sects once and for all.[23] Now demoralized by lack of regular pay and military supplies, the Hoa Hao troops staged a brief resistance, too weak to stave off the government offensive. By June 18, Soai's troops had been either eliminated or they had defected.

On June 19, Soai, with Vi and Hinh (former commanders in chief of the Vietnamese National Army who had joined Soai and Ngoan in the Seven Mountains), fled to Cambodia, and Ngoan surrendered to Diem. Only Ba Cut continued to hold out until he was arrested in April 1956. In July he was guillotined at Can Tho.[24] Thus by mid-1956 Diem had scored his first victory in his efforts to consolidate his position by crushing the power of the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Binh Xuyen.

By 1960 Diem and his junta had greatly improved the economy of the Republic of Vietnam but, in doing so, had become increasingly dictatorial. Diem's critics, growing more and more outspoken, now submitted a number of requests to Diem to democratize his regime. Among the non-Communist opposition groups petitioning for liberalization of Diem's government was the Committee for Liberty and Progress (Khoi Tu-Do Tien-Bo). This bloc, also known as the Caravelle group, comprised 18 politicians and professional men formerly identified with the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, the Greater Vietnam *(Dai-Viet)* Party, the Vietnamese People's Party, and dissident Catholic groups.[25] In the name of the bloc, Dr. Pham Huy Quat posted a manifesto to Diem on April 26, 1960, in which he "condemned the undemocratic elections of 1959, the continuing arrests which had filled the gaols to overflowing and the suppression of the freedom of the press and of public opinion," and demanded reform of the administration. Diem halfheartedly promised to liberalize the regime: "when the rebellion had been subdued and the people had gained more experience in democracy." Two later petitions issued by the bloc vainly demanded official recognition as a political party.[26]

Nevertheless, the government cautiously supervised Hoa Hao activities—particularly in Vinh Long Province—and prevented the sect from gathering for religious or other ceremonies. On April 5, 1960, however, the Hoa Hao were permitted to celebrate the Buddhist Memorial Day, Thanh Minh, in the cemetery of their war dead. Although the memorial day is usually an occasion for worshiping one's ancestors, in 1960 the government altered the nature of the ceremony, making it a memorial only to those who died in fighting for independence from the French or against the Viet Cong. The Hoa Hao, who had suffered casualties in both causes, were therefore permitted to gather. In Minh Thuan village, 500 Hoa Hao (a minor part of the total Hoa Hao population) gathered at the Hoa Hao war cemetery. More Hoa Hao would have come had their district chief notified them soon enough of their permission to attend. Those who assembled brought offerings and placed them on the tombs.[27]

On June 10, when local authorities observed members of the Hoa Hao in the cemetery preparing for another celebration, the anniversary of the foundation of the Hoa Hao religion, the authorities ordered the Hoa Hao to remove the pavilions and decorations for the celebration. The total amount of the contributions collected for the celebration was rumored to be 30,000 piastres. The cancellation of this ceremony by the government and the amount of money collected by the Hoa Hao point up the degree of animosity which existed between the Hoa Hao and the local authorities during the Diem regime.[28]

By the end of 1961 the National Liberation Front (NLF), formed in December 1960, replaced the Viet Minh and resumed the Viet Minh's anti-Hoa Hao policy. The sect was again caught in the middle—between the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and the National Liberation Front or Viet Cong, both of whom were seeking to eliminate it. In May 1962, Truong Kim Cu's Hoa Hao Battalion 104 was trapped and demolished in a simultaneous drive by the ARVN and Viet Cong Battalion 510.[29] The Hoa Hao, whose strength and numbers were greatly diminished, were still anti-Diem and anti-Communist.

While both the Government and the Viet Cong attacked the Hoa Hao militarily, Diem's regime also sought to eliminate the sect on moral grounds. On May 24, 1962 the highly controversial Law for the Protection of Morality was passed which outlawed "spiritism and occultism" (Article 6), presumably a direct stab at the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai. Refusing to be intimidated, a large number of Hoa Hao gathered on June 20 at the birthplace of Huyen Phu So in Viet Cong-infested Chau Doc Province (formerly part of An Giang) to honor the founder's mother, who survived him.[30]

SECTION V

STATUS SINCE THE DIEM REGIME

After the overthrow of Diem in the coup of November 1963, the new military junta headed by Maj. Gen. Duong Van Minh initiated a widely publicized campaign to win the allegiance of the dissident Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects. Two reasons motivated this campaign: first, the sects maintained small armies (the Hoa Hao claimed they had nearly 1,000 soldiers in two battalions and several units of provincial irregulars) which the junta wanted to integrate into the government forces; second, the junta was seeking the support of the Vietnamese peasants by working through the sects. According to *The New York Times*, the Hoa Hao claimed more than a million followers, primarily in the provinces along the Cambodian border.[1] Regardless of the accuracy of this figure, the Hoa Hao evidently exerted considerable influence over the populace, especially as a number of Hoa Hao were serving as province and district chiefs. In January 1964, the campaign to win the military support of the Hoa Hao had encountered serious difficulties and only a modicum of success.*

The Hoa Hao leaders still remembered that General Minh had been prominent in the operations leading to Ba Cut's capture and death; for the most part, the Hoa Hao leaders insisted on keeping their units intact. Some Hoa Hao units—civil guard companies—did, however, join the government; a newspaper article reports that several of these units were recruited and sent to Vi Thanh for anti-Communist training and that four other units were to be deployed in embattled An Xuyen Province. Lt. Col. Ly Ba Phamm, the Hoa Hao chief of Chuong Thien Province, also requested 500 Hoa Hao soldiers to reinforce his troops.[2]

Gen. Nguyen Khanh, who assumed power January 30, 1964, continued his predecessor General Minh's campaign to win the allegiance of the religious sects. He appointed a Hoa Hao (Dr. Nguyen Cong Hau) and a Cao Dai to serve as ministers in his cabinet. In February 1964 General Khanh paid an official visit to Long Xuyen, a center of Hoa Hao power, to receive public thanks for appointing members of the sect as provincial and district chiefs. Further proof of General Khanh's policy to conciliate the Hoa Hao was provided by U.S. Secretary of Defense McNamara's visit to Hoa Hao village and his meeting with Huyen Phu So's aged mother.[3]

---

* The same *New York Times* article also reported a clash between the Hoa Hao and regular ARVN troops in a street brawl in Vi Thanh (now Dua Lang), capital of Chuong Thien Province, in which a civilian was killed and two soldiers wounded. The fracas was discounted by some as meaningless, but others considered it another example of the historical antagonism between the Hoa Hao and Government forces.

Premier Pham Huy Quat, who assumed power in January 1965, also favored a policy of conciliation with the sects. Two representatives each from the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai were included in the 20-member National Legislative Council, and a Hoa Hao and a Cao Dai were appointed to serve in the new cabinet.[4] To remove any stigma attached to the Hoa Hao during their persecution by Diem, the Vietnamese National Police announced in March 1965 that to clear the name of Ba Cut—who was beheaded in 1956—a new trial would be held. A new trial would also be held for anyone else falsely arrested at that time who desired to clear his name.[5]

Meanwhile the Hoa Hao were continuing their campaign against the Communists. In the words of Lt. Col. Tran Van Tuoi, military chief of An Giang Province, "We are Hoa Hao here. Hoa Hao are anti-Communist. When my people see Viet Cong, they kill them or drive them away." [6] By April 1965 An Giang was reportedly one of the few provinces where the Viet Cong had been driven out, and, for the most part, kept out. This extraordinary situation was ascribed to the fact that the local population, under Hoa Hao protection, refused to cooperate with or be coerced by the Viet Cong forces.[7]

Simultaneously, the Hoa Hao, the Cao Dai, and various Catholic groups accused Premier Quat of being "too soft on Communism" and threatened to stage demonstrations.[8] Pressure from these and other groups brought Premier Quat's resignation in June; Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky was appointed to head a new military government. In July 1965, Marshal Ky conferred juridical recognition on the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai, indicating that his administration is placing even more importance upon conciliation between the religious sects and the Vietnamese Government.[9] Although it is too soon to evaluate Marshal Ky's policy toward the sects, experience has proven that no government can afford to ignore them.

Hoa Hao adherents—recently estimated to number between 450,000 [10] and one million [11]—are concentrated in An Giang and Chau Doc provinces and are also influential in the provinces of Ba Xuyen, Bac Lieu, Chuong Thien, Kien Giang, Kien Phong, Phong Dinh, and Vinh Long. Given proper leadership, the Hoa Hao could easily regain their former position of power.

SECTION VI

HOA HAOISM AS A RELIGION

The widespread appeal of Hoa Haoism, one of the four principal Vietnamese religions, is attributed to the simplicity of its doctrine. The founder, Huyen Phu So, as a disciple of Phat Thay Tay An, the Hoa Hao Buddha, preached a reformed Buddhism. The Living Buddha, as So came to be known, advocated a return to basic Buddhist precepts. Without sacerdotal hierarchy or special temples or pagodas, the faithful are free to practice their religion whenever and wherever they please. The absence of intermediaries is believed to enable the faithful to commune more deeply with their Maker. In contrast with the elaborate burial ceremonies practiced by other Vietnamese religions, So preached that "the . . . body . . . should be interred simply and without great ceremony so that its decomposition should not incommodate the living. Why spend lots of money under the pretext of materializing feelings of filial piety, fidelity and friendship towards the dead, when it would have been greatly preferable to show them such feelings when they were alive?" [1]

Those interested in becoming followers of Huyen Phu So, the Master, are not asked to undergo any public ceremony of initiation, but are merely obliged to observe So's teachings: to abide by the Four Ordinances and the Eight Points of Honesty, and to recite four prayers a day. The four prayers are prescribed as the following: "the first to Buddha, the second to the 'Reign of the Enlightened King . . . when the world will know peace' . . . the third to living and dead parents and relatives. The fourth, to the 'mass of small people to whom I wish to have the will to improve themselves, to be charitable, and to liberate themselves from the shackles of ignorance.' " [2] These prayers are said before an empty table covered with a red cloth as a symbol of universal understanding.[3] The cloth is red because the Vietnamese consider red the all-embracing color. Four magical Chinese characters, "Bao Son Ky Houng" ("a scent from a strange mountain"), adorn the cloth.[4]

The four precepts of the Hoa Hao religion are: 1) to honor one's parents; 2) to love one's country; 3) to respect Buddhism and its teachings; and 4) to love one's fellow man.[5]

The only physical offerings sanctioned by the Hoa Hao sect are water (preferably rainwater) as an indication of cleanliness, local flowers as a sign of purity, and small offerings of incense to chase away evil spirits. Prayers and offerings are made only to Buddha and Vietnamese national heroes, not to the genii or deities recognized by other Vietnamese religions.[6]

On the moral level, Huyen Phu So preached virtue: children should obey their parents; bureaucrats should be good and just toward their constituents; spouses should be faithful to one another. To reform and to simplify the practice of Buddhism without altering the basic doctrine, So imposed interdicts on his followers. The Hoa Hao faithful are forbidden to drink alcoholic beverages, smoke opium, participate in games of chance, or eat ox or buffalo meat. In addition, they may eat neither meat nor other greasy foods on the 1st, 14th, 15th, and 30th days of the lunar month.[7]

Present-day Hoa Hao presumably still follow So's teachings, as pictures of the founder appear in the homes of the faithful, generally above the table reserved for the practice of the cult. Thus, although the Hoa Hao are divided politically and militarily, their belief in So's teachings provides some measure of unity to the sect.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

No footnotes.

II. EARLY HISTORY AND STATUS DURING WORLD WAR II

1. Maj. A. M. Savani, *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam* (Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre-Mer, 1955), p. 98.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
3. Bernard B. Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," *Pacific Affairs*, XXVIII, 3 (September 1955), p. 244.
4. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
5. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
6. Donald Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indochina* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 89.
7. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
8. *Ibid.;* Fall, *op. cit.*, pp. 244–45.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 89–90.
11. Savani, *op. cit.*, pp. 101, 103.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 102–103.
13. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
14. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
15. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 246; Savani, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104.
16. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

III. STATUS DURING THE INDOCHINA WAR

1. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 247; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
2. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
3. Savani, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–106.
4. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 247; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
5. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 183; Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
6. Ellen Joy Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 211.
7. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
8. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
9. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–11.
12. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 275–78; Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
13. Savani, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.
14. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
17. *Ibid.*

IV. STATUS DURING THE DIEM REGIME

1. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 349–50.
2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 351.
4. Tillman Durdin, "Sect's Army Joins Vietnam Premier," *The New York Times*, April 1955, p. 1.
5. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 380.
6. Tillman Durdin, "Vietnam Outlines Stern New Policy," *The New York Times*, September 28, 1954, p. 5, col. 3.
7. Brian Crozier, "The Diem Regime in Southern Vietnam," *Far Eastern Survey*, XXIV, 4 (April 1955), p. 53.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
10. Crozier, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
11. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 383.
12. "Private Armies Unite in Vietnam," *The New York Times*, March 5, 1955, p. 1.
13. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 383–85; Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
14. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
15. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 386.
16. Tillman Durdin, "Sects to Get Posts in Saigon Cabinet," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1954, p. 6, col. 3.
17. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 387.
18. Robert Alden, "French Mediate in Vietnam Crisis," *The New York Times*, April 4, 1955, p. 3, col. 1.
19. Robert Alden, "Police in Saigon To Look for Arms," *The New York Times*, April 7, 1955, p. 10, col. 1.
20. Robert Alden, "Sect Head Bars Vietnam Fealty," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1955, p. 2, col. 5.
21. Lancaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 388–89.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 395–96.
23. Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 253.
24. *Ibid.*; Lancaster, *op. cit.*, p. 396.
25. Robert G. Scigliano, "Political Parties in South Vietnam Under the Republic," *Pacific Affairs*, XXXIII, 4 (December 1960), pp. 340–41; "A New Look at Vietnam," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XXXV, 2 (January 11, 1962), p. 49; Wesley R. Fishel (ed.), *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 228.
26. "A New Look at Vietnam," *op. cit.*, p. 49.
27. John D. Donoghue, and Vo-Hong-Phuc, *My-Thuan: The Study of a Delta Village in South Vietnam* (Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1961), pp. 39–40.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.
29. Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), pp. 354–55.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 256–67.

V. STATUS SINCE THE DIEM REGIME

1. "Vietnam Troops Clash With Sect," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1964, p. 6, col. 3.
2. *Ibid.*
3. P. H. M. Jones, "Khanh in Command," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XLIV, 5 (April 30, 1964), pp. 239–40.
4. Jack Langguth, "Saigon Installs Cabinet Designed To End Disunity," *The New York Times*, February 17, 1965, p. 1, col. 8.
5. "Posthumous Retrial Due for Vietnam Sect Leader," *The New York Times*, March 7, 1965, p. 16, col. 3.

6. Seth King "Vietcong Blocked by Sect in Delta," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1965, p. 7, col. 1.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Jack Langguth, "Saigon Catholics Fearful of Buddhist Army Purge," *The New York Times*, April 13, 1965, p. 1, col. 6.
9. "Cao Dai, Hoa Hao enjoy special status," *Saigon Daily News*, July 14, 1965.
10. King, *op. cit.*
11. "Vietnam Troops Clash With Sect," *op. cit.*

VI. HOA HAOISM AS A RELIGION

1. Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects," *op. cit.*, p. 245.
2. *Ibid.;* Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
3. Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects," *op. cit.*, p. 244.
4. Donoghue and Vo-Hong-Phuc, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
5. Maj. Phoi, Interview, August 13, 1965. (A Vietnamese camp commander in Chau Doc Province.)
6. Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects," *op. cit.*, p. 244.
7. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alden, Robert. "French Mediate in Vietnam Crisis," *The New York Times*, April 4, 1955, p. 3, col. 1.

———. "Police in Saigon To Look for Arms," *The New York Times*, April 7, 1955, p. 10, col. 1.

———. "Sect Head Bars Vietnam Fealty," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1955, p. 2, col. 5.

Burchett, Wilfred G. *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1963.

Buttinger, Joseph. "Are We Saving South Viet-Nam?" *The New Leader*, XXXVIII, Supplement, 26 (June 27, 1955), 1–15.

"Cao Dai, Hoa Hao enjoy special status," *Saigon Daily News*, July 14, 1965.

Carver, George A., Jr. "The Real Revolution in South Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs*, XLIII, 3 (April 1965), 387–408.

Crozier, Brian. "The Diem Regime in Southern Vietnam," *Far Eastern Survey*, XXIV, 4 (April 1955), 49–56.

"Dissidents Fight Vietnamese Army," *The New York Times*, March 9, 1955, p. 5, col. 1.

Donoghue, John D., and Vo-Hong-Phuc. *My-Thuan: The Study of a Delta Village in South Viet-Nam.* Saigon: Vietnam Advisory Group, Michigan State University, 1961.

Durdin, Tillman. "Premier Revises Vietnam Cabinet," *The New York Times*, September 25, 1954, p. 3, col. 2.

———. "Sect's Army Joins Vietnam Premier," *The New York Times*, April, 1955, p. 1.

———. "Sects to Get Posts in Saigon Cabinet," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1954, p. 6, col. 3.

———. "Vietnam Outlines Stern New Policy," *The New York Times*, September 28, 1954, p. 5, col. 3.

Fall, Bernard B. "Indochina Since Geneva," *Pacific Affairs*, XXVIII, 1 (March 1955), 3–25.

———. "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," *Pacific Affairs*, XXVIII, 3 (September 1955), 235–53.

———. *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963.

Fishel, Wesley R. (ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Hammer, Ellen Joy. *The Struggle for Indochina.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954.

Harris, George L., *et al.* *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Jones, P. H. M. "Khanh in Command," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, XLIV, 5 (April 30, 1964), 239–41.

King, Seth. "Vietcong Blocked by Sect in Delta," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1965, p. 7, col. 1.

Lancaster, Donald. *The Emancipation of French Indochina.* London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Langguth, Jack. "Saigon Catholics Fearful of Buddhist Army Purge," *The New York Times*, April 13, 1965, p. 1, col. 6.

———. "Saigon Installs Cabinet Designed To End Disunity," *The New York Times*, February 17, 1965, p. 1, col. 8.

Mus, Paul. *Vietnam: Sociologie d'une guerre.* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952.

"A New Look at Vietnam," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* XXXV, 2 (January 11, 1962), 47–51.

Maj. Phoi. Interview. August 13, 1965. [A Vietnamese Camp commander in Chau Doc Province.]

"Posthumous Retrial Due for Vietnam Sect Leader," *The New York Times,* March 7, 1965, p. 16, col. 3.

"Private Armies Unite in Vietnam," *The New York Times,* March 5, 1955, p. 1.

Savani, Maj. A. M. *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam.* Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre-Mer, 1953.

Schmid, Peter. "Free Indo-China Fights Against Time: Vietnam's Winding, Rocky Road," *Commentary,* XVIV, 1 (January 1955), 18–29.

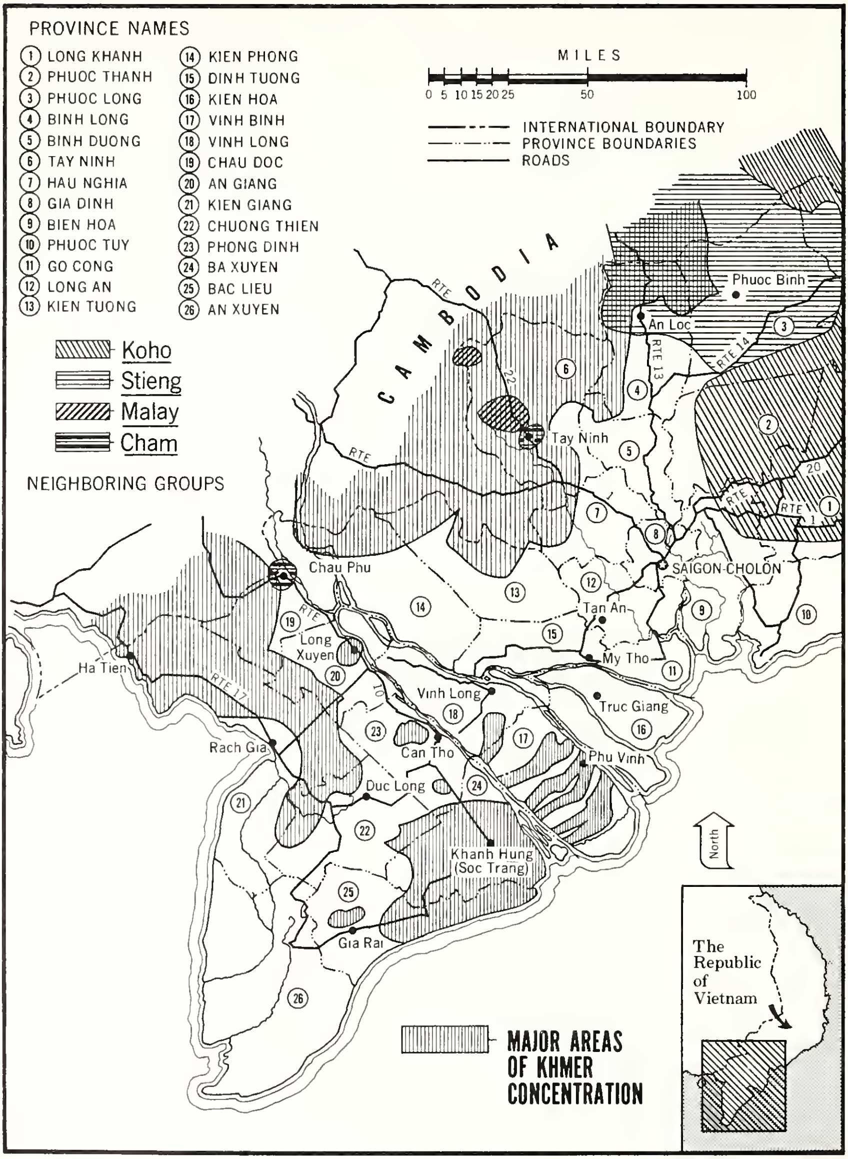
Scigliano, Robert G. "Political Parties in South Vietnam Under the Republic," *Pacific Affairs,* XXXIII, 4 (December 1960), 327–46.

"Sects Hold Half of South Vietnam," *The New York Times,* March 14, 1955, p. 3, col. 4.

Tas, Sal. "Behind the Fighting in South Vietnam," *The New Leader,* XXXVIII (May 9, 1955), 11–12.

"Vietnam Troops Clash With Sect," *The New York Times,* January 26, 1964, p. 6, col. 3.

Warner, Denis. "Vietnam's Militant Buddhists," *The Reporter,* XXX, 10 (December 3, 1964), 29–31.


PROVINCE NAMES
① LONG KHANH
② PHUOC THANH
③ PHUOC LONG
④ BINH LONG
⑤ BINH DUONG
⑥ TAY NINH
⑦ HAU NGHIA
⑧ GIA DINH
⑨ BIEN HOA
⑩ PHUOC TUY
⑪ GO CONG
⑫ LONG AN
⑬ KIEN TUONG
⑭ KIEN PHONG
⑮ DINH TUONG
⑯ KIEN HOA
⑰ VINH BINH
⑱ VINH LONG
⑲ CHAU DOC
⑳ AN GIANG
㉑ KIEN GIANG
㉒ CHUONG THIEN
㉓ PHONG DINH
㉔ BA XUYEN
㉕ BAC LIEU
㉖ AN XUYEN
Koho
Stieng
Malay
Cham
NEIGHBORING GROUPS
MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 50 100
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
ROADS
CAMBODIA
RTE
RTE 22
RTE 13
RTE 14
RTE 20
RTE 1
RTE 17
RTE 10
Phuoc Binh
An Loc
Tay Ninh
SAIGON-CHOLON
Chau Phu
Tan An
My Tho
Long Xuyen
Ha Tien
Vinh Long
Truc Giang
Can Tho
Phu Vinh
Rach Gia
Duc Long
Khanh Hung (Soc Trang)
Gia Rai
North
The Republic of Vietnam
MAJOR AREAS OF KHMER CONCENTRATION

The Khmer

CHAPTER 24. THE KHMER

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Khmer, a people of Cambodian descent, form the second largest ethnic group in the area formerly known as Indochina. In the Republic of Vietnam, these remnants of a vast, ancient empire now number between 400,000 and 600,000 and are scattered throughout the Mekong Delta area.

The Khmer language belongs to the Mon-Khmer language family and is related to the M'nong and Bahnar tongues. Khmer social organization is patriarchal, but the women wield considerable influence in the household and in divorce and inheritance proceedings.

Like the Cham minority group, the Khmer were influenced by Indian civilization in their early history and have retained cultural elements which reflect this tradition. Whereas the Vietnamese practice Mahayana Buddhism, the majority of the Khmer adhere to Theravada Buddhism.[1]

Principal economic activities consist of irrigated rice cultivation, fishing, fruit and vegetable farming, and weaving.

Name of Group

According to legend, the Khmer kings were descended from the great hermit and seer, Kambu Svayambhuva; "Kambuja," translated by the French to "Cambodge" and by the British to "Cambodia," is a derivative of his name. Early Chinese inscriptions contain the word "Kambudjadesa" or "sons of Kambu." [2] The name Khmer refers to the dominant population of Cambodia and differs from the term "Cambodian," which encompasses other groups in addition to the ethnic Khmer and also designates any national of the country of that name. In the Republic of Vietnam, the names Khmer, Khmer Krom, and Cambodian are used interchangeably when speaking of the people descended from the ancient Khmer of the Empire of Funan.

Size of Group

Population figures for the Khmer in the Republic of Vietnam, which are little more than informed estimates, range between

400,000 and 600,000. In 1957, the largest concentrations of Khmer were located in the following provinces: Chau Doc (then called An Giang), 40,978; Ba Xuyen, 118,328; and Kien Giang, 42,022.[3] The majority of the ethnic Khmer, the total group numbering about 2,600,000, inhabit Cambodia in the Tonle Sap region; smaller groups have settled in Thailand and Laos.[4]

Location

The Khmer are located in settlements throughout the Mekong Delta, particularly around Khanh Hung (formerly Soc Trang) and Vinh Loi (Bac Lieu) in Ba Xuyen Province; Rach Gia and Ha Tien in Kien Giang Province; Phu Vinh (formerly Tra Vinh Province); Can Tho in Phong Dinh Province; and in the Provinces of Tay Ninh and Chau Doc. Scattered Khmer settlements are also found near the towns of Long Xuyen, Cholon, Vinh Long, Tan An, and Bien Hoa.[5]

The Vietnamese are the principal neighbors of the Khmer. In Tay Ninh and Chau Doc, the Cham and Malays live in small settlements adjacent to the Khmer and maintain a harmonious relationship with them despite religious differences. The Stieng tribe, the closest Montagnard group, inhabits Binh Long Province near the Khmer of Tay Ninh Province.

Terrain Analysis

The region inhabited by the Khmer consists of a continuous plain no higher than 3 meters above sea level, dissected by several rivers which drain into the South China Sea. This locale may be subdivided into three areas: the delta of the Saigon and Dong Nai Rivers, the Mekong Delta, and the Ca Mau Peninsula. The first region comprises ancient alluvial soils or "gray" lands and, in some areas, red basaltic soil. The French established numerous plantations in this area because of the fertile soil, the absence of dense forest, and the close proximity to Saigon.[6] The lower reaches of this delta region are broken up by small river tributaries and are for the most part overgrown with mangroves. The Song Soirap receives the waters of the Vaico Occidental River and is navigable for small boats.

The Mekong Delta is dominated by two branches of the main river: one, which has five channels, retains the name Mekong; the other, formerly called the Bassac, is now called the Song Hau Giang. Extensive drainage projects and special methods for the utilization of marshy ground have facilitated intensive cultivation of the region. Mangroves and sand dunes are limited to small areas along the coast.[7] South of Chau Doc, steep granite hills reach a height of 614 meters above the low-lying plains. The hills themselves are barren and unpopulated, but ethnic Khmer, attracted by the market town of Tri Ton, have settled in villages at the base of the cliffs.[8]

The Ca Mau Peninsula, unlike the other two regions, is sparsely populated due to extensive areas of mangrove or dense forest swamp. The *tram (Melaleuca leucadendron)*, which reaches a height of 15 to 20 meters, is the predominant form of vegetation in these forests. No major rivers traverse the peninsula, but several secondary rivers drain into the Gulf of Siam. Sediment transported by offshore currents from the mouth of the Mekong is deposited along the shore of the peninsula, causing the southwest portion of the coast to extend into the sea at a rate of from 60 to 80 meters a year.

The rail line running northwestward from Saigon to Loc Ninh is inoperable. No railroads run south of Saigon, the terminus of the Trans Viet-Nam line. The network of secondary roads in the delta is often subject to Viet Cong interdiction. Although many good secondary or provincial roads serve the Mekong Delta region, no national routes extend into the area. Few roads exist in the coastal portion of the Ca Mau Peninsula due to frequent floodings. The chief means of transportation in this area is by water, along the numerous navigable canals.[9]

SECTION II

BACKGROUND

Ethnic and Racial Background

The modern Khmer, or Khmer Krom, are a heterogeneous people who represent centuries of cultural and racial fusion. Their precise origins are obscure, but the Khmer are believed to have migrated prior to 2000 B.C. from the northwest, possibly Tibet, into present Cambodia and the Mekong Delta. In the beginning of the Christian era, the Khmer encountered peoples of Indonesian stock inhabiting Cambodia and drove them into the mountains.[1] Despite this direct contact with primitive tribal groups, the Khmer have refused to acknowledge any common origin or cultural affinity with them.[2]

Hinduization of the Khmer began in the third century B.C., when small groups of Hindu traders, attracted by the riches of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, migrated to Cambodia and to the present Republic of Vietnam and established states modeled after Hindu kingdoms. These waves of migration, reaching a peak in the ninth and tenth centuries, were accompanied by a blending of races and cultures. Incursions of Indo-Malays from Java in the eighth century and Thai invasions from the 10th to the 15th centuries produced a concomitant mixing of races. More recently, the Khmer have intermarried with Vietnamese, Chinese, and Europeans.[3]

Language

Khmer belongs to the Mon-Khmer linguistic family, which includes such distant languages as the Mon and Khasi languages of Burma, the Wa-Palaung tongues of the Shan states, and the Munda languages of India.[4]

At one time, Khmer was spoken throughout the Mekong Valley—present-day Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and the part of the Republic of Vietnam formerly known as Cochin China. As a result of the invasions and occupation by the Thai and Vietnamese, the territory inhabited by the Khmer-speaking population was considerably reduced. Today, Khmer-speaking groups are located in Cambodia, parts of Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Many Montagnard tribes, such as the Sedang, M'nong, and Stieng have languages related to Khmer.[5]

Khmer is an atonal language and the position of the words in the sentence determines their grammatical function.[6] Khmer words have monosyllabic and disyllabic roots with a system of prefixes and infixes for forming words of more than one syllable. In all other instances, words are invariable in form; there are no declensions, conjunctions, or genders. Plurals are indicated by auxiliary words meaning many, numerous, group, or crowd.[7]

Contact with the Indians brought many linguistic changes, as Sanskrit words were borrowed to describe newly adopted Indian administrative, judicial, and religious systems. Many Pali words entered the Khmer vocabulary in the 15th century when Theravada Buddhism replaced Brahmanism and Mahayana Buddhism.* The Khmer continue to adopt Pali words to fill the gaps in the technical and metaphysical lexicon.[8]

Less complex than Vietnamese, the Khmer language may nevertheless pose problems to the outsider. Not only must he understand purely linguistic nuances, but he should also know how to distinguish between the language of the common people and that of "noblemen." One vocabulary is used to address older persons and monks and another is spoken by the younger common people. This is not a matter of speaking well or elegantly, but a rigid social obligation among the Khmer; an infraction is considered serious enough to result in sanctions or refusal of audience. The Khmer do not, however, expect outsiders to know and observe these linguistic rules of etiquette. Personal pronouns in Khmer are similarly hierarchic. These words are important, even for outsiders, and are not difficult to memorize. Faulty usage may be interpreted as a lack of deference.[9] The speaker does not designate himself by the same "I" or "me" when speaking to an inferior, an equal, a superior, or a monk.[10]

The Khmer believe that most emotions—with the exception of anger—may be freely displayed as long as they are honest; emotions are reflected by facial expression and intonation. Any sign of exaggeration or melodrama is considered an affectation and is generally avoided. An increased tempo of speech and a raised voice express displeasure; a low grumbling sound indicates sorrow and sympathy.[11]

The Khmer appreciate conversational witticisms and humorous repartee. Despite their mild natures, they are prone to make caustic, tongue in cheek remarks; but their sensitivity to criticism prevents them from appreciating irony or bitter satire. The ability to improvise and versify, facilitated by the rhythmic patterns of Khmer speech, is considered extremely desirable and socially rewarding.[12]

---

* See "Factual History," p. 7, and "Religion," p. 1089.

Khmer conversation is often replete with allegorical reference, with meanings too ambiguous for the outsider to grasp; a number of linguistic cues assist the Khmer to respond appropriately. The outsider, however, unable to read these linguistic cues accurately, is seriously hampered in understanding Khmer behavior.

Pali and Sanskrit are generally employed only in Buddhist religious communities. Pali, the sacred language of Theravada Buddhism, used in religious texts and incantations, is understood by some Khmer, but only those dedicated to permanent monkhood are able to write it. Although Sanskrit is usually confined to religious scholarship, it is being used more and more, together with Pali, for the formation of technical and scientific terms in the Khmer tongue.[13]

Vietnamese serves as the secondary language for most Khmer, but the degree of fluency depends on where they live and how they earn a living; that is, how much contact they have with the Vietnamese. In areas comprising large Khmer enclaves, the Vietnamese and Chinese inhabitants in the area speak Khmer, as do any neighboring Montagnard tribesmen.

Khmer script is based on a corrupted form of Sanskrit writing imported from southern India in the early Christian era. Written phonetically, from left to right, Khmer comprises 40 consonants and 17 vowels. Two forms of printing characterize the style of writing; *chrieng*, described as cuneiform or wedge-shaped, is employed for administrative texts, books, journals, and formal announcements; *mul*, cursive or rounded in form, once limited to the transcription of Pali texts, is now used for the capital letters of a title page, for the italicized words in a chrieng text, and for inscriptions on public buildings.

Efforts to romanize the Khmer language have largely failed due to the resistance of the Buddhist clergy. The monks fear that romanization would weaken the import of sacred teachings and thus reduce the control of the Buddhist clergy over the people.[14]

The decorative and artistic Khmer script commands respect even among the uneducated and illiterate Khmer who believe that anything written originates from a sacred source and wields magical powers; spirits, they believe, obey written inscriptions. The poorest peasants are so enamored of the well-drawn letters that they often take pieces of paper inscribed with a simple word and place them near the statue of Buddha in their houses.[15]

Legendary History

The Khmer in Cambodia explain their origin and evolution in a number of legends having some basis in historical fact. The Khmer in the Republic of Vietnam, as a marginal group of the Cambodian Khmer, may also subscribe to the facts contained in these legends.

Since the second Bronze Age, the Khmer have distinguished between the "river" and the "mountain" men, who have clashed relentlessly through the centuries. Each group was reportedly divided into factions that derived a livelihood from either the mountain or the river. This dualism characterizes the early social organization of the Khmer. The mountain chiefs and sorcerers, who commanded fire and lightning, were descendants of the divine bird Garuda. The rulers of the waters and the rains, the river chiefs and sorcerers, were descendants of the divine fish or the serpent Naga.

The foundation and expansion of Indian civilization in Cambodia are echoed in the following legends. Huen-Tien (Hun Chen/Kaundinya),* a Brahman prince from India or the Malayan Peninsula, prompted by a dream in which a god gave him a divine bow and told him to go to sea in a trading vessel, embarked on a voyage. A change in the course of the wind caused Huen-Tien to reach Funan, the earliest Hindu Kingdom, corresponding roughly to present-day Cambodia and former Cochin China. His arrival was greeted by the sovereign, Queen Lieu-ye, who came in a boat to plunder the vessel. The prince shot an arrow which pierced the queen's boat, frightening her into submission; thereafter, Huen-Tien ruled the country. According to some, Huen-Tien and Lieu-ye married, and the prince taught the semisavage Funanese the elements of Brahmanic belief and otherwise civilized them.[16] This version of the arrival of Indian civilization is essentially that taught in Cambodian schools today.[17]

A variation of the legend recounts that the king of Aryadesa, named Kambu Svayambhuva, was wandering in the desert of Cambodia when he entered a cave and was confronted by huge snakes speaking in human voices. Kambu grew to like the snakes, or Nagas, who could assume human shapes, and married Lady Neak, the daughter of the Naga king. The King, imbued with magical powers, converted the arid land into a fertile region and Kambu ruled over the kingdom, named "Kambuja" after him.[18]

Factual History

Until the cession of Cochin China to France in 1862 and the proclamation of Cochin China as a French colony in 1867, the recorded history of the Khmer in the Republic of Vietnam is essentially that of the Khmer in Cambodia. Early Khmer history is commonly divided into four periods: Funan, from the early first century A.D. to the middle of the sixth century; Chen-La, to 802 A.D.; Kambuja or Angkor, 802–1432; and Transitional Cambodia, 1432–1758.

The Funan Period: The Contact With India. The Funanese occupied the lower Mekong region in the first century A.D. together with two other politically independent peoples, the Cham and the Khmer. By the third century, the Funanese had conquered the Cham and the Khmer, and by the end of the fifth century Funan was at the height of its power.

---

* See "Factual History: The Funan Period," p. 1057.

According to two Chinese envoys who visited Funan, an Indian Brahman named Hun Chen conquered the territory held by Queen Willow Leaf (Lieu-ye), married the sovereign, and founded the first Kaundinya dynasty. The last ruler of the dynasty, Pan-Pan, placed the cares of government on his general, Fan-man or Fan Che-man, who, after the king's death, was elected king by the people (c. 200 A.D.). Funan owed its greatness to this king, who established a powerful navy, conquered the adjacent maritime countries, and extended his domain to include Siam, parts of Laos, and the Malay Peninsula.

At the end of the fourth century or beginning of the fifth century, the second and final stage of Indianization began under the rule of a Brahman named Kiao-chen-ju, who had reportedly just arrived from India. He extended and strengthened the worship of the Indian deities (introduced by the earlier Kaundinya), especially the state worship of the Siva-Linga.* In addition, the laws of Manu (a Brahmanic legal code) and a central Indian alphabet were introduced and enforced at this time.

By the sixth century, the essential elements of Hindu culture were well established in Funan. The three principal religions of India—Sivaism, Vishnuism, and Buddhism—were being practiced in Funan. Indian philosophy, art, language, and literature flourished; even the Indian caste system prevailed.

The chief vassal state of Funan was Chen-La, located in the upper Mekong region. In the middle of the sixth century, Funan became a vassal of Chen-La, and in the seventh century, it was annexed by that country.

The Chen-La Period: Birth of the Khmer Kingdom. The 250-year period when Chen-La (Chinese for Kambuja) ruled over Funan †—from 535 to 802 A.D.—was characterized by territorial expansion of the empire (to the boundaries of present-day China), civil strife, and subjection to and later independence from Malay rule.

Chen-La was inhabited by the Khmer people after they migrated from the north, separated from the Mon,‡ and defeated the Cham on the Mekong. From the fusion of Funan and Chen-La was born the

---

* The Brahman god Siva, worshipped in the form of a linga, or stylized phallus, representative of the creative energy of the god.

† As the successor of Funan in the genealogy of the Khmer Kingdom.

‡ The Mon settled in the Sittang-Irrawaddy Delta in present Burma and in the Mekong-Menam Delta in Thailand.

Khmer Kingdom. The name Kambuja originated at this time. The legend concerning the river people and the mountain people is partially substantiated by the historical facts of this period. At the beginning of the eighth century, following a series of civil wars in the delta region. Chen-La split into two parts, referred to by the Chinese as Water Chen-La and Land Chen-La. Maritime Chen-La formed the center of the future Khmer Empire; upland Chen-La, probably denoting a kingdom in the northern part of Cambodia or Laos, remained separate until the early part of the ninth century. An extensive and powerful state, upland Chen-La maintained diplomatic relations with China and India.

Kambuja or Angkor Period: Consolidation of the Khmer Empire. The accession of King Jayavarman II early in the ninth century marked a new era in the history of Kambuja. Jayavarman II revived the tradition of Kambuja by claiming descent from Kambu rather than from Kaundinya, the ancestor of the Funanese kings. He began the task (continued by Jayavarman III and Indravarman) of reuniting the empire, which comprised a series of principalities. In this period of consolidation—802 to 1432—the Khmer Kingdom included all of central Indochina and extended to Yunnan in southern China. Jayavarman II is also credited with initiating a massive construction program which reached its climax in the 12th and 13th centuries, when Kambuja replaced Funan as a center for the proliferation of Hindu culture into the rest of Southeast Asia.

Under Indravarman and his seven successors, a period of a century and a quarter (877–1001), the consolidation of the Khmer Empire was completed. Kambuja maintained suzerainty over all of Laos, Siam, the Menam Valley, and the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. Foundation of the Angkor civilization occurred in this period.

The next two centuries were characterized by internal rebellion and recurring hostilities with the neighboring kingdoms of Champa and Annam. In 1177, the Cham sent a naval expedition up the Mekong River, sacked the Kambuja capital of Angkor, and returned home laden with booty.

In 1190, Jayavarman VII conquered and annexed the Champa Kingdom. Under this last great king of Kambuja, the Khmer Kingdom reached its greatest territorial limits, including all of Southeast Asia, with the exception of Upper Burma, Tonkin, and the southern part of the Malay Peninsula.

With the death of Jayavarman VII the disintegration of the Khmer Empire began, brought on by the country's impoverishment and exhaustion resulting from the long war with the Annamese and the Cham and the increasing pressure of Thai invasions. Finally, in 1430–31, after a series of Thai-Khmer wars, assisted by treachery within the Khmer capital, the Thai seized Angkor and precipitated the downfall of the Khmer Empire. Although the Khmer later recaptured Angkor, they abandoned it as a capital because of the change in state religion from Brahmanism to Theravada Buddhism and because of the enormous cost of maintaining temples no longer essential to the life of the people.

Transitional Cambodia: 1432–1758. During this transitional period, the Khmer continued to resist the aggression of their neighbors. Thailand and Annam each seized territory and vied for suzerainty over the Khmer for the next 260 years. Thailand gained land in the north and west; Annam won land in the east. The latter region, seized in the early part of the 18th century, was the domain of the Khmer of Cochin China, now the southern part of the Republic of Vietnam.

Weak kings governed Thailand and the Khmer in Cambodia in the 17th century, while the powerful Nguyen rulers of southern Annam were appropriating the Donnai-Mekong Delta. The Annamese established prosperous settlements in Cochin China, and the Khmer had to recognize Annamese titles to the land and pay tribute to Annam. Annamese seizure of the most fertile land resulted in widespread poverty. By the end of the 17th century, the Annamese had absorbed all the lower delta east of the Mekong and organized it into administrative units. The year 1758 marked the completion of Annamese expansion, occupation and fortification of the delta, and the end of Khmer domination of Cochin China.[19]

Since 1758, the Khmer of Cochin China have been a minority group. During the French occupation (1862–1954), the Khmer, as members of the rural populace, had to shoulder the economic burdens created by the ambitious public works programs of the French.

Settlement Patterns

Whereas the Vietnamese live clustered in cohesive village units, the Khmer do not appear to prefer any one type of settlement pattern and generally live isolated in small groups amid groves of coconut palms. The nature of the terrain seems to dictate the physical pattern of Khmer settlements; along the Mekong, for example, the houses are pressed closely together and line the river banks.

The term village does not apply to the Khmer settlements, where houses are either isolated one from another or are gathered haphazardly into groups of two or three houses. In the latter type of settlement, one house belongs to the father, the others to the married daughters. When the number of sons-in-law reaches three or four, the settlement is called a phum. Communal life is notably absent from the phum where no common house exists, and the temple serves as the only meeting place. The existence of a phum does not presuppose the presence of a temple; some have none, others have one, two, or three. Larger Khmer settlements, numbering 20 to 100 houses, more rarely 200 to 300, have also been reported.[20]

Khmer houses or *pteah* are of several types: wood with tile roofs, *paillote* (palm leaves), or woven bamboo with either a paillote or thatched roof. Pilings of wood, generally of *sokram* (*Xylea* species) or of *pchek* (*Shorea* species), measuring from 2.5 to 3 meters in height, support the house.* Pilings provide such obvious advantages as protection from floods, from animals both large and small—boars and tigers and rats—as well as, so the Khmer believe, from invisible spirits living on or under the earth. In addition, according to one source, the Khmer preference for the pile-type dwelling is characteristic in areas where wood is plentiful.[22] †

Entrance to the house is by way of a ladder which has an uneven number of rungs and which emerges onto a veranda decorated with flowerpots. Traditionally, for religious reasons, the rectangular-shaped house was always oriented toward the east, and the entrance was on a short side. However, this tradition is apparently dying out; houses are not always oriented to the east and the entrance is occasionally on a long side. Houses of poor Khmer consist of only one room; houses of the well-to-do may be divided into two buildings. The interior arrangement sometimes varies, but usually includes a reception room in front and two compartments on the sides, each divided by partitions of wood or sugar palm leaves into smaller rooms for the family members. The kitchen is located either on the veranda or in a separate shed connected to the rear of the main building by stairs or a passageway. The family's cart, loom, pirogue, and tools are stored beneath the house. The thatch or sugar palm roof is very steep at the top and levels off to cover the veranda.[23]

The temple compound is located close to the houses and near a grove and a pond. Buildings of two categories are contained within the compound; the first includes small huts, usually on piles, reserved for the monks and novices; the other category comprises buildings open to laymen, includes the temple proper *(vihia)*, various *sala* (structures with roofs but no side panels) reserved for the activities of the community, such as instruction and reception of guests. The compound also includes some tomb monuments called *stupa* or *chetdey* (literally: tomb that has life in it), shrines dedicated to the *neak taa* (local spirits),‡ residences for the aged (in larger monasteries), and a huge wooden drum with a buffalo skin head for calling the monks to the services of the day.[24]

---

* According to a returnee, Khmer exposure to Vietnamese influence has resulted in their adoption, in some areas, of houses built directly on the ground rather than on piles.[21]

† Similarly, the Vietnamese and Chinese have, by tradition, built houses directly on the ground, a practice which originated in the steppes of northern China, a region devoid of trees.

‡ Literally: "the spirits of those who have been dead for a long time."

The temples, closely resembling those of Cambodia, consist of a large wooden building raised on a platform, surrounded by a gallery, and surmounted by several roofs. Beneath the elegant cornice, which prolongs the angles of the pinnacles, sculptured wooden gables, either gilded or painted, enclose subjects drawn from Brahmanic iconography rather than from the legend of Buddha. Often visible on the roofs of the temples are motifs of Chinese origin, reminders that the Khmer of the Republic of Vietnam are a marginal group exposed to the artistic influence of neighboring peoples.

The interiors of Khmer temples are soberly decorated compared with the luxurious temples of the Chinese and the Vietnamese. Mats spread on the floor are used by the monks during their prayers. On the main altar rests a large statue of Buddha, often surrounded by other statues or figurines.

The altar murals recount the life of Buddha, especially stories called *jataka*, which relate episodes of Buddha's life after his death and before he entered Nirvana. Also illustrated are episodes of the *Ramayana*, an epic poem written by the Indian poet Valmiki. Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana*, is one of the incarnations of the Brahman god, Vishnu, who has provided a source of inspiration for much of Khmer art. The legend of Indra [25] may also be depicted in altar murals. In its tolerance of other religions, Theravada Buddhism has preserved the Hindu gods, making of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Yama, and Indra figures of worship and defenders of Buddhism. Brahma and Buddha are frequently confused in artistic representation, for example, in temples and statues. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva share the three forces of the universe: creation, preservation, and destruction. Indra, known by his green face, rules over heaven, and Yama, over hell.

SECTION III

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics

The Khmer are a heterogeneous people with characteristics derived from several racial types. Taller than the Vietnamese, the average height of a Khmer male is about 5 feet 5 inches. Chests and thighs are muscular and make the Khmer appear more robust than the Vietnamese; they have slightly receding foreheads, prominent cheekbones, and short chins. Khmer noses are generally large, straight, fairly wide, and slightly upturned at the end. Their dark brown eyes are normally straight; slanted eyes may also occur, but a true Mongolian fold is usually absent. The mouth is large, with full, incisively modeled lips. The Khmer have black, wavy or curly hair. The men wear their hair closely cropped; the young women wear their hair long, but married women and old women sometimes shave their heads.[1]

Health

A survey in mid-1962 showed that health and sanitary conditions in the Republic of Vietnam were deemed grave enough to constitute serious social problems.[2] The conclusions drawn from this study doubtless apply to the Mekong Delta regions inhabited by the Khmer. In these areas, health conditions are closely related to the question of water supplies. Malaria-bearing mosquitoes breed in the water and water-borne diseases frequently reach epidemic proportions Control of these diseases is hampered by the use of irrigation ditches for drinking purposes.[3]

The Khmer have no bathhouses, but each family, or possibly two or three families, owns a pool of water for bathing. They bathe several times a day and wash their clothes almost daily. Bathing serves as a social occasion; men and women of the same age bathe together. When older people are bathing, the young Khmer stay away and vice versa. Once or twice a week the women, in groups of three or five, go outside the village to bathe in the river.[4] If they have engaged in hard work, the Khmer wash themselves entirely before eating; after the meal, they wash their hands again.[5] In the morning and after the evening meal they clean their teeth, using the index finger and no toothpaste.[6]

The Khmer housewife presumably lays great stress on the cleanliness and upkeep of her home. Traditionally, the Khmer girl owes her good fortune in life to the maintenance of her kitchen; when her kitchen is neat and clean, it is thought she will make a good wife. Before proposing marriage to a particular girl, the young Khmer man reportedly visits the girl's kitchen for assurance that he will have a well kept home.[7]

The Buddhist monks, whose living habits are considered exemplary, are also required to clean and straighten up their individual quarters, to sweep, and to maintain the temple every day. They must bathe daily; they must wash their mouths and brush their teeth thoroughly after eating, to eliminate any trace of food.[8] These customs are practiced primarily for religious reasons, but they may also involve personal hygiene considerations.

Problems of sanitation among the Khmer are compounded by the Buddhist taboos against killing. Disease-bearing flies, mosquitoes, lice, and rats cannot be harmed with impunity. The monk, particularly bound by this rule, may not work in the fields for fear of accidentally killing a worm or an insect.[9]

Several types of diseases afflict the people living in the Mekong Delta; many diseases are spread by flies, water, food, and filth. The housefly, most prevalent during the rainy season, helps spread yaws, trachoma, and skin infections. Water used for cooking and drinking is drawn from the rivers, canals, and pools which are also used for bathing, laundering, and watering animals. This water often carries amoebic and bacillary dysentery and typhoid fever. Intestinal parasites, such as hookworm, are contracted from inadequately refrigerated or insufficiently cooked food, or by working barefoot in the flooded rice paddies.[10] Nutritional diseases, particularly goiter, resulting from iodine deficiency, are evident in the delta, especially in the Can Tho and Khanh Hung areas.[11]

Other diseases prevalent among the Khmer are malaria, leprosy, and tuberculosis. The incidence of malaria is lower in the delta than in the Central Highlands, largely because the species of mosquito prevalent in the former prefers animal to human blood; but malaria still poses a threat, particularly after the rainy season.[12] Leprosy is quite extensive; the cases in isolation are believed to represent only a fraction of those afflicted. Tuberculosis, passed from person to person, is abetted by malnutrition and, in the towns, by overcrowded living conditions.[13]

Illness among the Khmer has two aspects: first, the recognition that certain ailments stem from physical disorders which can be treated by modern or folk medicines; and second, the belief that some diseases may in addition have "moral" or "spiritual" causes due either to the patient's having offended a spirit or having been less devout than required. The latter type of illness is cured by offerings made to the spirits and/or to Buddha. Diseases are thus treated according to both traditional and modern medical practices.[14] Belief in the power of sorcerers is widespread; any person in the community is considered capable of causing illness or death by possessing any object, or merely the name, of the victim. Preventive medicine involves wearing amulets and making sacrifices to shield the body from the penetration of evil spirits. Benevolent spirits who are very sensitive and powerful must also be propitiated, for when offended they may also inflict punishment in the form of disease.[15]

Departure of a spirit from the body can only be induced by sorcerers—called *kru* or *kruv*—and monks reciting incantations and conducting rites. Traditional therapy employed by the monks is varied and includes such remedies as herb teas, oils, and potions made from excrement (said to combine symbolic, magical, and medicinal properties).[16]

Rice forms the staple of the Khmer diet. In some areas of the delta where the use of polished rice is prevalent, dietary deficiencies rank as an important health problem. When rice is milled by modern mechanical means, the outer layers and the germ containing the protein and vitamins are removed; after this process, little nutriment other than starch remains. When vitamin B_1 is removed and the diet consist mainly of starch, such diseases as beriberi may develop. Some Khmer in the rural areas, however, still husk and pound their own rice by hand, thus retaining most of the food values.[17]

Manual Dexterity

Excellent artisans, the Khmer are capable of making chased weapons and jewels; the women weave and dye their own cloth. They make all their kitchen utensils, tools, carts, pirogues, and most of their own clothing. Despite this artistic skill, the individual Khmer is usually reluctant to make items not designated for his own personal use.* [18]

The Khmer are excellent boatmen and are adept at handling a craft even in dangerous rapids.[19]

Psychological Characteristics

A knowledge of Theravada Buddhism and the Theravada conception of life facilitates an understanding of the Khmer psychology.† According to Buddhist doctrine, a person passes through many lives, and what one accomplishes in one life determines the nature of the following life. This view of life is paradoxical: on the one hand the Khmer are fatalistic; on the other hand, they believe that everything has a moral foundation. On occasion the Khmer ignore the future and abandon themselves to their immediate concerns. This improvident side of their character explains their ability to dissipate a year's earnings in one night of gaming.[20] Yet they believe that by leading their present lives virtuously, though they may not reach Nirvana, they can assure themselves of a better life in the next world. However, the Khmer consider the European way of life inconsistent, appearing to operate by a double standard. A man, they feel, cannot be moral in public office and immoral as a private individual.[21]

---

* See "Social Structure," p. 1068.

† See "Religion," p. 1089.

The gentle, optimistic, joyous nature of the Khmer is reflected in their generally smiling countenances. They are tolerant and long-suffering, either through good nature or apathy. But when goaded beyond endurance, outbursts of anger are terrible though short-lived. The women sometimes engage in violent quarrels in which they scratch, bite, pull each other's hair, and throw one another into the water; a few minutes later they are the best of friends, laughing and chatting together as though nothing had happened.[22]

The Khmer are passive and peace-loving and appear to be unambitious. As long as they can cultivate enough food for daily needs, they are usually content to leave commercial profit and economic control of the country to the Vietnamese and Chinese.[23] With a great sense of independence, the Khmer seldom feel bound by secular contracts. For this reason, it is difficult to find and keep Khmer laborers; they are easily diverted from their work and feel free to leave their jobs after earning enough to fill their immediate requirements.[24]

The nuclear family, or at most the phum, forms the basic unit of the Khmer social structure and defines the limits of the average Khmer's horizon. Anything beyond this group usually fails to arouse the Khmer's curiosity. Itinerant traders form the sole link with the outside world.[25] Each member of the nuclear family expects to assist the others in time of trouble, to share income and produce, and to cooperate in agricultural and domestic work. The individual retains his identity within the nuclear family by bearing only a given name, with no surname. When several related nuclear families must share a house because of low income, each nuclear family maintains its individuality by keeping its finances separate or by living in a separate part of the house.[26]

The Khmer are naturally hospitable, although unpleasant experiences with strangers have made them suspicious of outsiders. Once the stranger has gained the confidence of the people, he is treated as graciously as the family means will allow.[27] If he trusts someone, the Khmer will outdo himself in personal devotion and loyalty.

SECTION IV

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

General Social Organization

Khmer society is organized into the basic units of nuclear family and personal kindred or extended family. The nuclear family usually has its own house, which is surrounded by the houses of the married daughters, a son-in-law usually establishing his home near his in-laws. The membership of the personal kindred varies and may include grandparents or grandchildren where present, parents' siblings, first cousins, and the children of siblings. Relatives (generally the spouses of close blood relatives such as aunts and uncles, or the relatives of a spouse) are usually included among personal kindred.[1] Extended families are not necessarily concentrated in villages, but live scattered over the countryside.* [2] The Khmer distinguish between kin and nonkin; stronger bonds of affection and obligation presumably characterize relations between the former than between the latter. The closeness of the family relationship supposedly determines the intensity of these sentiments. Friction among relatives is condemned by public opinion and is believed to be punished by supernatural beings.[4]

The kinship system is patriarchal in theory, but although the father is the legal head of the family, his influence over it is actually not absolute. Divorce is initiated by either husband or wife; land and other property may be held in individual ownership by either husband or wife; inheritance is usually divided equally among the children.†[5] Evidence of descent from an earlier matriarchal system is also present: lineage is traced through the mother; children take the mother's name (and her religion if they are issue of a religiously mixed marriage); in case of divorce, children remain with the mother; a woman is the principal personage in many domestic ceremonies; and she retains the right to select her husband.[7]

Position of Men, Women, and Children

The father is the legal head of the Khmer household, but his power is less absolute than that of the Vietnamese father.[8] He must obtain his wife's consent for any important action, such as becoming a priest.[9] Men and women share the field labor, the men tending to the more strenuous tasks, such as plowing, harrowing, and threshing. The men also collect the sugar palm juice, care for the cattle, and buy or sell cows, chickens, and land.

---

* Village organization and individual obligation toward it have never been as strong among the Khmer as among the Vietnamese.[3]

† One early source claimed inheritance among the Khmer descended in the female line.[6]

Women hold an honored position in the household. As controllers of the family budget, women wield almost as much authority as their husbands. They care for the children, do the housework and gardening, weave, and make mats and bins of thatch. In addition, they prepare paddy for planting, help harvest the rice, make sugar, help care for the cattle, pigs, and chickens, and buy and sell rice, pigs, and food.[10]

At an early age children are taught respect for their parents, an attitude strengthened by tradition and customary law. Both boys and girls help in the field and domestic work.[11] From adolescence, when they "enter the shade," until they are married, the girls lead chaste and retiring lives under their parents' supervision.[12] Village morality condemns premarital relations; a pregnant bride brings shame upon her whole family. In theory, if a girl objects to a proposed marriage, she has the right to refuse; in practice, however, the parents arrange the marriage and the children acquiesce in their parents' desires. Upon marrying, the children are free to live in a separate house without first requesting permission from their parents to establish themselves outside the family dwelling.[13]

Marriage

The Khmer prefer village endogamy (marriage within the village group) as a means of ensuring a trustworthy mate, but in actuality exogamous marriages involving members of villages within the local area predominate. Ideally, a young man in love with a particular young girl asks his parents to initiate the marriage arrangements. More frequently, however, the parents select the girl, and the son will not even know her. He will abide by his parents' wish and marry her; but if after a year of marriage the couple prove incompatible, the son may choose a second wife and either keep the first wife or divorce her.

The betrothal, which may last as long as two years, involves several visits between the two families, the first visit being merely a courtesy call. The betrothal transactions are conducted by intermediaries who are usually relatives or neighbors of the young man's family. On the first visit they bring fruit to the girl's mother and discuss with her such unrelated subjects as the harvest or fishing. Meanwhile the mother inquires about the young man; if the reports are good, further discussions are allowed to take place. The second visit is also very casual.

On the third visit, the intermediaries and the boy's family arrive at the girl's house bearing platters of betel and areca nuts which will seal the betrothal agreement. They are received by a venerable old man from the girl's family who assumes the position of the *meba* (literally mother-father). The intermediaries (in consultation with the boy's parents) and the meba discuss the final price to be paid by the young man's family on the wedding day; betel is chewed and the betrothal fixed. The *achar* or diviner, who must then be consulted, fixes the date of the marriage according to the signs of the births of the young people.* The marriage is delayed until a lucky day occurs; a period of between 2 months and a year may elapse before the ceremony takes place. In the latter case, the boy's family must bring presents twice a month to the girl's parents. Formerly, during this time, the young man went to serve his future in-laws to show them his qualities as a worker. Although this custom is generally dying out, it is still practiced in some rural areas.

Several days prior to the wedding date, the young man and his relatives build a large hut near the girl's house and decorate it elaborately; they also erect a smaller one to serve as the kitchen. The marriage ceremony continues for 3 days, the last day being the date set by the achar. The first evening the groom, his parents, and relatives make merry—singing, feasting, and listening to music in the large hut.

The morning of the second day, the intermediaries go with much pomp to the girl's house bearing the trays of presents promised at the betrothal. The meba greets them and receives the gifts in the name of the girl's parents. Betel is passed around and chewed by everyone present except the very young; meanwhile, the girl remains in her room until the evening, when she will emerge to greet the Buddhist monks.

The morning ends with a great feast and a ritual haircutting session. At this time two hairdressers, a married woman and a married man, sing, dance, and click their scissors, then trim the hair of the bride and groom. Meanwhile, the musicians play the ritual tune called "Cutting the Leaves." A procession is then formed to gather the areca tree flowers to be presented to the meba by the groom when he enters the bride's room after the marriage.

After dinner the achar makes an offering called the *krong peali.* With prayers and invocations, he buries in the garden a tray of offerings and the crude figure of a man fashioned from gluey rice. After the Buddhist monks have consecrated the house, the achar prepares some gum lacquer which the girl rubs on her teeth. The achar ties a thread of raw cotton—for purification—on the girl's wrist and returns to the wedding hut, where he ties a similar thread on the boy's wrist.

---

* See "Birth," p. 1072.

On the third day, before dawn, the intermediaries, accompanied by musicians, bring to the meba the "value of the milk sucked by the girl," represented by six or seven piasters. Meanwhile, the groom emerges from the wedding hut wearing his finest clothes over the traditional, brocaded, red tunic.

A mat is laid in the courtyard and on it are placed an overturned mortar, a pitcher of water, an offering of puffed rice, and a pig's head. The groom sits on the mortar; then, when the archar beats his gong, indicating the rising of the sun, the groom raises his hands, touches the mat with his forehead, extends his arms, and turns his palms around three times, after which the achar pours water on his hands and says a prayer.

The groom then proceeds to the bride's house where he gives the meba the areca flowers (gathered the night before) placed in three banana trunks or three pots. The groom sits on a mat in the center of the room and greets those present by turning his hands around. Before him are three trays containing threads of raw cotton, areca flowers, a knife or hatchet for the areca, and an empty platter to be filled with piasters by the guests.

After a ritual sword dance, the dancer draws back the curtain to the girl's room. While the musicians play the tune of Lady Neak, daughter of the Naga king who wed the first Khmer king,* the bride emerges, wearing a tiara with scarab wings and a fake chignon, and takes her place on the mat. The bride and groom, together for the first time during the ceremonies, bow forward with their legs extended to the left, elbows resting on cushions, and hands joined. The shrewd bride will endeavor to raise her head higher than her husband's at this time to ensure having the upper hand in the household.

The guests, grouped around the bride and groom, now participate in the ritual by passing a cotton thread from hand to hand, eventually encircling the couple. Three lighted candles attached to a metal lotus petal disk, the *popil,* around which have been tied two betel leaves, are then circulated from guest to guest three times, each person blowing the flame toward the couple.

The bride and groom rise and the achar binds their wrists with two cotton bracelets and covers them with areca flowers. One by one, parents and friends bind the couple's hands, scatter flowers on them, and place money on the tray. An accountant records the sum, the equivalent of which must be given by the recipients when invited by the donor to some future family ceremony.

The couple retire to the back room; the bride precedes, followed by the groom holding the tip of his wife's scarf, as did the first Khmer king after marrying the Naga princess. The wife presents her husband with new garments and both feed each other a banana and a cake. They then return to the main room to serve the guests.

---

* See "Legendary History," p. 1056.

Young married couples generally prefer to establish a new house separate from that of their parents. In practice, however, the couple often live with the girl's or the boy's family either because they lack money to build a new house or because the parents desire to have one married child remain in the house to care for them—and eventually to inherit the house as compensation. Matrilocal residence is more commonly chosen because the women are more reluctant to leave their homes and villages than are the men.[14]

Divorce and Second Marriages

Divorce, although rare, occurs in cases of incompatibility, prolonged unjustified absence, failure to provide, or adultery on the part of the wife (but not of the husband). In the event of the death of a spouse, the remaining spouse takes over the household and may remarry.

Polygamy is legal but is usually practiced only by the wealthy. First wives are frequently opposed to polygamy; many try to prevent their husbands from taking a second wife.

Marriage is prohibited between members of the nuclear family—including step-relations—and between aunts and nephews and uncles and nieces. Also possible are levirate and sororate marriages—marriage between surviving spouse with a brother or sister of the deceased.[15]

Birth

Of the three principal domestic events—birth, marriage, and death—birth places the Khmer household in the greatest danger. If a woman dies in childbirth, the wickedness of her ghost is doubled by the fetus, which has been angered at not having been born. Before childbirth, certain precautions must be taken to protect the child from evil spirits. First, just prior to birth, everyone except the midwife and members of the family is excluded from the house. Then, to further protect the mother, the child, and the household, the achar places a 3-day prohibition on the house.

Shortly before delivery of the child, a basket filled with paddy, bananas, candles, incense sticks, grains of raw cotton, and pennies (also a knife and a pair of scissors, if it is the first child) is placed at the foot of the bed. The basket and its contents must not be touched until the Ceremony of the Churching, when it is given to the midwife.

In wealthy Khmer homes, when labor begins the mother is placed on a bed covered with a mat under which a fire is kindled.

The longer the mother remains over the fire, the better; this causes the bad blood to go away. But in poorer homes, the mother is placed on a mat directly on the floor and the fire is lit beneath the house. To prevent the evil spirits or ghouls from seeping through the floor in the form of heat or smoke to suck the mother's blood, the father, at the achar's orders, encircles the fire with brambles.[16]

After the delivery, the achar places a 3-day interdict on the house; with chalk he marks a cross at each of the four corners of the building and places a pineapple leaf on either side of the door. During this time, the mother must remain isolated from the outside world, not even exchanging a word with anyone.

On the morning of the 4th day, when the interdict is lifted, the Ceremony of the Churching takes place, at which time the mother must receive the midwife's forgiveness. The officiating midwife makes an offering, announces the end of the 3-day interdict, and extinguishes the fire beneath the bed.[17] The mother begs the midwife to "wish me no evil, neither me nor my child because I have caused you trouble and fatigue, and made you touch the blood." When the midwife replies, "I wish you no evil," the mother ties a strand of raw cotton on the midwife's right wrist and wishes her good health. The midwife ties a thread on the mother's right wrist, and the father ties the mother's left wrist; then the child's wrists are tied while the midwife bids the infant to "stay a long time near your mother. . . ." The ceremony ends when the basket of gifts is presented to the midwife and after the father buries the afterbirth at a crossroads.

Child-Rearing Practices

A child's name is provided either by a monk familiar with the stars or by the father who suggests several names to the mother who then selects one. The birth and name are registered officially on the 7th day after the birth.[18] Parents generally choose a common name which will not arouse the evil spirits. A name such as "dog" or "pot" is believed to disgust the evil spirits and to cause them to seek vengeance.

The sign under which the child is born is extremely important, more so even than the name, for the sign will be considered many times during the person's lifetime. Before the child marries, for example, the diviner must be consulted to determine whether the signs of the two to be married may be safely joined; if so, when the crossing can propitiously occur.[19]

Two childhood ceremonies, the "Cutting of the Topknot" and the "Retreat Into the Shadows," although still practiced in some remote rural areas, are being abandoned by the Khmer. Until the age of 12, children in some remote areas wear a topknot, while the rest of the head is shaved. Girls twist the topknot into a chignon; boys let it fall freely. The date for the solemn cutting ceremony is set for a propitious day. After a procession and a recitation of prayers, the ceremony takes place in an area marked out by a thread of white cotton to ward off evil spirits.[20]

The "Retreat Into the Shadows" refers to the practice of the withdrawal of the girl upon reaching puberty or "as soon as the sun has touched her." In regions where this custom survives, the girl must remain shut in her room for 6 months, hidden from the sun and the sight of men. During this time she is forbidden to eat meat, fish, or eggs; she must speak little and refrain from anger. The end of this confinement was, and in some areas may still be, marked by a celebration in which the girl, without looking, pulls an object from a pile of rice prepared by the diviner: a silver object presages a rich husband; a spoon, much work; a bottle, a drunken husband. The girl participates ritually in the pantomime of a portion of the marriage ceremony, in which a sword replaces the husband. Dancing and singing take place while the girl blackens her teeth with lacquer; the ceremony terminates with the girl saluting the rising sun.[21]

Education

The Khmer receive most of their education informally in the home. There they learn respect for their elders and rules of etiquette to guide their actions in society. Girls learn the principles of cooking, weaving, housekeeping, and child rearing from their mothers. Boys learn to build homes, make tools, and raise animals. Both girls and boys assist their parents in the fields and acquaint themselves with agricultural techniques by observing and working alongside their parents.

Current information relating to the formal education of the Khmer is fragmentary. Before the arrival of the French, education was limited to that provided by the temple schools, under the direction of the monks. The French laid the foundation for a modern educational system by establishing Franco-Vietnamese schools in an effort to expand the formal education of the population. Free elementary education was available in the delta and in 1927 became compulsory for children of both sexes. Despite this decree, education prior to independence was contingent upon the initiative of each community.

The Khmer refused to send their children to the Franco-Vietnamese schools, where the language of instruction was either French or Vietnamese. Instead, they promoted the development of traditional instruction in the temple schools, three types of which already existed: independent schools entirely free from French control; French-subsidized schools; and reformed schools almost exclusively religious in their teaching. By 1944, the reformed schools numbered 209 and included 7,274 pupils of which over 1,000 were girls, who were until that time excluded from all formal education. The monks, who were instructors in these schools had received their higher education in Phnom Penh, Tra Vinh, or Soc Trang (now Khanh Hung).[22]

Following independence, the Vietnamese Government officially abolished previous methods of education and redesigned the system to promote a spirit of unity and patriotism. The new objectives sought to develop the mental and physical capabilities of each child in order to make him a good citizen. These worthy aims and the principle of compulsory education were decreed, but the degree of implementation in Khmer areas is uncertain.

A few public primary schools are known to exist in areas having predominately Khmer populations. The lessons are taught mainly in Cambodian by Khmer teachers, Vietnamese serving as a secondary language. As the students gain familiarity with the Vietnamese tongue, the use of the Cambodian language tends to decrease in favor of the official language used in courses taught by Vietnamese instructors. Statistics are lacking on the number of secondary schools especially devoted to Khmer children.

Some Khmer children still attend the temple schools (sala), where they receive mainly religious instruction (precepts of Theravada Buddhism) from the monks, who, as teachers, are highly respected for their knowledge, which in reality is quite limited; they learn as they teach—by rote.[23]

Death and Cremation

A death, although less of a jeopardy to the household than a birth, still requires certain precautions to ward off evil spirits. A corpse is feared because it is believed that ghosts, ghouls, and birds of evil augur rise from its flesh, bones, and blood. A dissatisfied soul is capable of returning to haunt the family and of seeking vengeance. Through love, respect, and fear, the family honors the deceased in a ceremony as fine as their means will allow.

The Khmer cremate their dead unless the deceased desired to be buried. But a buried corpse is all the more baneful; the Khmer believe ghosts and ghouls are more readily born from a slowly decomposing body.

When a Khmer is dying, the son or closest relative brings the objects used by the sick man to a table beside the bed; a pot of rice, a pot of salt, dried fish, a mat and cushion for his head, cloth, bowls, etc. Later, on the day of cremation, these objects are presented to the local monastery as the last offering of the deceased.

Rituals are performed to ensure that the dying man will be freed from the earth: images of Buddha are placed before his eyes and a canopy of white cotton is suspended over his bed to help him forget his house. Any amulet is removed and given to the family. The monks lead those present in repeating Arahan! Arahan! (the Saint! the Saint!) to replace any evil thoughts in the sick man's mind with holy visions; this is to prevent him from being reborn in hell or in the shape of an animal.

When the sick man appears to be dying, an areca flower is placed in his hands; a leaf of the sacred fig tree, inscribed with a verse written by the achar, is placed on his lips. The moment the man dies, the achar lights a candle at the head of the bed and a lamp at the foot of the bed; the latter will bear the flame to the pyre. The achar inserts a piece of silver between the dead man's teeth and places sacred fig leaves on his eyes, nostrils, ears, chest, and hands as a symbol of purification.

The body is washed and wrapped in a white sheet; the face, which has been covered with saffron-colored rice flour, is veiled. Then the body is placed in a leaded coffin, where it may remain several months before being transported to the pyre. A cotton thread intricately wound around the body must hang out of the coffin. During their watch over the deceased, monks, either in twos or fours, hang onto the thread and recite prayers. Two tall bamboo poles are raised outside the house; from each flies a white streamer, indicating a death in the family.

On the morning of cremation, the parents, attired in white mourning dress, their heads shaved, place pieces of white cloth over the coffin. One of these will be taken as the supreme gift or *bangskol* from the deceased by the monk who offers the invocation.

A procession forms to escort the coffin to the pyre. As soon as the dead man is taken out of the house, the achar throws three pitchers of water and a stone to prevent the soul from returning to torment the family. The nature of the procession varies according to the region and the wealth of the family concerned. A rich urban family might, for example, include in the procession a dragon bier, or a European hearse driven by a coachman clad in white silk pajamas, and some monks, each in a rick-shaw, advancing to the tune of a Chopin funeral march.

According to one description, the funeral procession of a poor peasant might include the following: the musicians playing buffalo skin drums and xylophones; the abbot of the local monastery dressed in a yellow robe; the achar bearing a shovel and the standard of the dead man—a long bamboo cross wrapped in white cloth; an old woman carrying the paddy basket and lamp which rested at the foot of the dead man's bed; the son of the deceased leading the body by a cotton band extending from his head and tied to the thread hanging out of the coffin; the flower-covered bier escorted by four monks; a little girl sprinkling paddy along the path; and finally, the widow and her neighbors.

The procession moves around the pyre three times; the body, facing east, is placed on the pyre and the achar lights the fire. When all has burned, the achar uses his spade to collect the ashes and fashion them into the form of a man with the head facing west. He inquires of those present, "It is well so?" to which they reply "Not bad"; he re-forms the figure with the head to the east and receives the approval of the mourners. The people then collect the unburned bones, which the son carries home after they have been purified by the achar.

The following day, and every year thereafter, the monks will be invited to recite prayers before the urn containing the purified bones. When the family has accumulated enough money for the ceremony, the urn will be solemnly carried to a stone cone called stupa or chetdey. One stupa generally serves a whole village, but wealthy families may have one of their own.[24]

Property Ownership Within the Family and Inheritance Customs

Land and other property may be held individually by either husband or wife and is subject to bilateral inheritance or purchase. Sugar and coconut palms can also be inherited from either the father or the mother and may be purchased or sold at will. Joint property consists of that earned by husband and wife together; in case of divorce, this is divided equally between the two.

Ideally, inheritance is divided equally, in value if not in goods, among all the children. Actually, inheritance varies according to individual circumstances; parents may, for example, favor a child who has taken good care of them or one who has not made a prosperous marriage. Land is usually distributed to children as they marry, whereas goods are apportioned at the death of the parents. If there are no descendants, property reverts to the parents or to the brothers or sisters of the deceased, who will sell it to pay for an elaborate funeral.[25]

Level of Civilization

Prior to any major event, the Khmer consult the achar, who in turn studies the horoscope and the calendar to establish a propitious date for the occasion. Hence, an understanding of the Khmer measurement of time is of considerable importance.

The Khmer have known several eras. The present one is Buddhist, beginning with the entry of Buddha into Nirvana in 483 B.C.*

The Khmer have a lunar-solar calendar, based on the movement of the moon, but corrected to accord with the solar year. This is achieved by periodically adding either a few days or a month.

---

* See "Religion," p. 1089.

Time is measured by the duodenary cycle; each of the twelve months is named for an animal. The animal presiding at the birth date of an individual determines such questions as sacrifices for curing a disease; the day for entering a new house; the possibility or impossibility of a marriage. Depending on the year in which he is born, the Khmer belongs to the "race" of men, gods, or *yakh;*† Buffalo, Hare, Serpent, and Boar are years of men; Rat, Dragon, Horse, and Goat are years of gods; Tiger, Monkey, Cock, and Dog are years of the yakh race. Like the Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese, each Khmer year has a corresponding natural element, such as fire or water. But the Khmer make more subtle distinctions between the elements; they distinguish between rain and sea water, for example.

Lunar months, like the years, are numbered, but the number one corresponds with *maksir,* which falls in November-December, rather than with the 1st month in the year. These numbers are used to make certain predictions; however, fortune and misfortune are especially determined by trimester, according to the animal of the cycle. Of still greater importance, from the point of view of ritual, is the distinction between months having 29 days, "male months," and those having 30 days, "female months." Such ceremonies as marriage and ordination can only occur during female months.

The month is divided into two periods: the first 15 days, or *khnot,* end with the full moon; the next 14 or 15 days, or *ronoc,* correspond to the waning moon. The days are numbered from 1 to 15 with the addition of the word *kot,* "to increase," or *roc,* "to decrease," depending on whether they belong to the first or the second period. The 8th and last days of each period are considered holy days; the devout go to the pagoda to receive the Buddhist commandments, and, on the 2d and 4th holy days, the monks confess their sins.

The week consists of 7 days, named for the same planets as are the days of the occidental week. A number and a color correspond to each day. The success of a venture depends, generally, on the day of the week. On Mondays, for example, one must avoid proposing marriage or borrowing or lending money; on Thursdays, the more one speaks, the less value is placed on one's words; Saturdays are unlucky days, but since spirits and demons like them, ceremonies in honor of them are preferably performed on that day.

The lucky and unlucky days of a particular individual depend on his *tonsa,* the day which, for a given cyclical year, determines the fortunate and unfortunate days and serves as a base for the calculations necessary to establish the predictions. For example, on a Sunday, success is predicted for those born in the year of the Rat and the Goat, whose tonsa it is; but Sunday is dangerous for those born in the year of the Buffalo. Likewise, a man born in the year of the Dragon will beware of Saturdays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.[26]

---

† The yakh usually has a human form, is repulsive in appearance, and devours men; he can fly and can assume any guise he chooses.

Sophistication in Use of Tools and Machines

Depending on the region and the degree of Vietnamese influence in the area, the Khmer use either Vietnamese implements or those used traditionally by the Khmer, which are essentially the same as those used centuries ago by the civilizations of Angkor.* The latter are described below.

To prepare the soil for planting, the Khmer use a swing plow *(nongkol)* light enough to be carried on the shoulders. Drawn by buffaloes, this plow penetrates the soil no deeper than 10 centimeters, a distinct advantage in the clay soils which are best suited to rice cultivation. But when the ground is dry and hard, the Khmer plow is useless until the next rain.

The Khmer harvest their rice with a long-handled sickle *(trakan)* shaped like a winged serpent. The short blade, fashioned from wood of the guava tree, is bent to permit straightening the overturned stems of the paddy before cutting them. Working with this type of sickle, the average Khmer needs 10 days to harvest a hectare (not quite 2 acres) of rice. Threshing is accomplished by a pair of oxen yoked together and forced to walk over the paddy. Little girls follow the oxen, gathering the straw left behind in the threshing process. The rice is then winnowed, cleaned, and stored in a bamboo enclosure until it can be husked.

The Khmer, unlike the Vietnamese, usually husk their own rice. A homemade mill, now disappearing from areas near towns, is composed of two superimposed cylinders, into which are inserted strips of wood; the rice is husked by rubbing these sticks together and then is pounded in a mortar with a pestle formed from a tree trunk. In some areas, the women pound the rice with their hands.

In addition, the Khmer make their own hoes, spades, harrows, and irrigation equipment. The last includes the noria *(rohat teuk)*, used in the dry season to raise the water a yard or more from the ditches to the ricefield. The noria is a narrow box 2 yards long, containing a chain on which revolve wooden scoops. The peasant farmer sits on the ground and pedals the noria to activate the chain. The use of these farm implements is generally restricted by lack of capital.[27]

Pirogues and oxcarts provide transportation, as do the common sampans. Pirogues, traditionally, are made from a single trunk of the koki tree, which, according to legend, can be planted only by a monk or a prince. The Khmer makes the pirogue by hollowing out the tree trunk with an axe and fire. The oxcart, a great source of pride, is so carefully assembled from pieces of carved and polished wood that nails are not used to put it together. The body rests on a triangular chassis and on a cradle in the form of sleigh runners. The runners, one on each side, enclose the wheels and prevent the cart from sinking into the mud. The cradle and chassis serve as springs between the body and the axle. A beam, carved in the shape of a serpent's tail, curves upward between the heads of the oxen and is attached to them by cords; the movement of the oxen's heads causes the beam to bob up and down, supposedly to frighten alway elephants.[28]

---

* See "Factual History," p. 1057.

SECTION V

CUSTOMS

The customs discussed in this section prevail among the Khmer of rural Cambodia and probably resemble, in a general way, the beliefs and practices of the rural Khmer in the Republic of Vietnam. Regional variations of customs may exist, depending on the degree of influence wielded by neighboring groups as well as by Western cultures.

Dress

Both men and women generally wear either a *sampot* or a sarong. The former consists of a piece of cotton or silk cloth draped around the loins and tied on the stomach; the two ends are rolled together and passed between the legs from front to back and tucked in behind. The sarong consists of a piece of cloth whose ends are sewn together to form a cylinder; worn like a skirt, the remaining cloth is gathered into vertical pleats and tied in front.

Formerly, women covered their chests with a band of cloth passed over the left shoulder, leaving the right shoulder bare. These garments may still be seen in some rural areas, but where Western influence is strong, the women wear a blouse over the sampot. In some rural areas, the women wear a long skirt and tunic different from either the sampot or the sarong. Young women generally wear their hair long; elderly women often shave their heads to indicate that they can no longer bear children.

For festivals and ceremonies, men wear snug-fitting white jackets which button down the front. Men and women frequently wear a long scarf of madras-type fabric, shaped into a turban, about their heads.[1] The *krama,* as it is called, also serves as a swaddling cloth for babies or as a sack for fish; it is washed every day.[2]

Children usually remain nude until the age of 6 or 7, when they begin to wear the sarong or sampot and the krama.[3]

The monk's costume comprises three yellow or saffron-colored garments: a loincloth, a shoulder sash, and a toga. To resemble the robes worn by the early monks, which were made of dusty rags picked up from along the road, the togas are fashioned from several pieces of cloth, sewn end to end, rather than from a single piece of fabric. The monks supposedly go barefoot, but most of them wear sandals. To protect their bare, shaven heads from the sun the monks often carry yellow or white parasols; they shave their heads, chins, and eyebrows.[4]

Folk Beliefs

Folk beliefs relating to every phase of Khmer life are evident in urban as well as rural areas. Specific fears or taboos may vary according to region and even family. The following are examples of the types of beliefs which have been reported by persons working with the Khmer.

Certain words are entirely taboo; other words may be spoken only at night. In a particular family, the hare is called a "wild buffalo," and betel nuts are referred to as "white flowers"; failure to use these epithets may bring unhappiness to the family.[5]

Odd numbers are generally favorable, and even numbers unfavorable, except in the case of months which number alternately 29 and 30 days; only the latter are considered complete and propitious enough for marriage and for entry into a new house. Even numbers, the direction to the left, and facing the west are usually affiliated with death.[6] Orientation is extremely important to the Khmer, who associate direction with mythical correlations between space and time. Each day of the week and hour of the day, certain cosmic forces (such as the "fire that strikes" (lightning), the "breath of life," and the "breath of death") emerge from one of the cardinal points. For this reason, the Khmer often speak in terms of direction; for example, when asked the question, "Where are you going?" they answer, "North," or "South," rather than saying, "Home" or "To the fields."[7] At night they sleep with their heads pointing south; all other directions, they fear, expose them to the powers of evil.[8] One source of information, however, claims that the peasant farmer sleeps with his head to the east and his children sleep with their heads pointing south.[9] The peasant works his fields moving from south to north.

Certain rules of etiquette have interdicts of sacred or magic origin. A Khmer's head is thought to deserve great respect; that of a monk is sacred. Patting a child on the head was traditionally not only impolite but also extremely dangerous, for it was believed that the harm to the child could only be averted by the death of the person who committed the impious act. Stepping over a Khmer squatting or lying down in a crowd is also considered reprehensible.[10]

The Khmer believe that supernatural beings control all of nature and that, like themselves, all creatures seek to ensure a favorable destiny by placating the spirits through certain rituals. Monkeys, for example, are believed to pay an annual tribute to the crocodiles at a certain hour and place. Failure to appease the spirits in the prescribed manner can only bring harm.[11]

Some Khmer beliefs are associated with houses, their construction, and use. The important parts of a house—the pilings, the main post, and in some areas the ladder—must remain in contact with the earth at all times; visible and invisible dangers are believed to enter by way of these features. The pilings must always measure an odd number of meters—usually 2.5 or 3—because even numbers are considered unfavorable. Symbols are drawn on the pilings and ladder, and flour or oil is rubbed on them in the ritual of purification. If one of the rungs of the ladder snaps when the husband steps on it after the marriage ceremony, he must refrain from touching his wife that night or one of the couple will die. In areas where the ladder is drawn up at night, the last rung must remain outside; the guardian spirit of the house perches there and protects the inhabitants from vampires and ghosts.[12]

Drinking and Smoking Customs

The alcoholic beverages preferred by the Khmer are palm wine or *sra thnot* (made from sugar palm juice) and rice wine or *sra angha*. The latter is made from dried cooked rice mixed with rice flour, a leaven, a type of ginger, and the bark of a tree which tastes like licorice. The mixture is allowed to ferment in a large crock, and water is added when the wine is drunk.[13] Buddhist law prohibits monks from drinking any alcoholic beverage; tea is served when the monks are invited into private homes for ceremonies.[14]

Both men and women chew betel quids—an areca nut and a bit of lye wrapped in betel leaf; a small amount of tobacco is sometimes added—to relax and to forget their daily cares, the effect being between that of tobacco and that of opium. Betel is also reported to have medicinal properties.[15] The importance of betel in the life of the Khmer is emphasized by the amount of paraphernalia used to prepare and store it: a tray holds the leaves and nuts; special pruning shears cut the nuts; boxes of all shapes hold the chopped betel nuts. Betel is included in offerings to the spirits and is used to seal an agreement as, for example, in the marriage ceremony.[16]

Cigarettes are also popular among the Khmer. Strong dark tobacco is grown extensively in the delta and is rolled into cigarettes by the Khmer themselves. The peasant often keeps a box of tobacco under his pillow and, upon waking, rolls a cigarette with a fresh *sangker* leaf.[17]

Eating Customs

Meals are sacred to the Khmer; they believe lightning will spare those who are eating. Among the wealthier Khmer, cooking is refined to a complicated art.[18]

Rice is not only the staple food of the Khmer, but also the object of a special cult. The Khmer vocabulary emphasizes the quasi-religious nature of rice: the verb "to eat" is translated by "to eat rice"; the peasant calls himself the "man of the ricefield"; a kitchen is "the house where the rice is cooked." Moreover, each stage in the development of the rice has a specific name; for example, one for the plant itself, one for the unhusked paddy, one for the cooked rice, one for rice popped over the fire. The paddy is given poetic names and names describing the size, shape, and color of the rice; such names as Little Fish, Elephant's Tail, Young-White-Girl, and Red Cat are among those commonly ascribed to the paddy. Rice, the Khmer believe, is as "sensitive as a woman"; one must flatter it, fete it, offer it gifts and libations periodically. Numerous rituals are performed throughout the year in honor of the rice and the goddess of rice.[19]

Prahok,* or dried or fresh fish, is eaten with the rice. *Nuk-nam,* fish sauce made from fermented prahok, is popular with the Vietnamese, but is less important to the Khmer.[20] The sugar palm provides fruit, juice, and sugar as well as the palm wine. Local fruits include coconuts, mangoes, bananas, guavas, papayas, sapodillas, tamarinds, tangerines, jackfruit, and grapefruit. Small gardens provide mint, ginger, turmeric, peppers, sweet potatoes, yams, white potatoes, gourds, cucumbers, squash, beans, tomatoes, and eggplant.[21]

The average Khmer peasant eats two meals a day; one is eaten in the ricefields at midday; the other, at home in the evening. The farmer's son brings him his noon meal, which consists of a bowl of rice with dried fish or prahok and a few vegetables. The family takes the evening meal together in the kitchen, on a sort of bamboo bed. Each person is given two bowls; one for the rice, the other for soup. The men eat with a spoon; the women and children, with their fingers.[22]

Entertainment

The Khmer, heirs to a rich aesthetic tradition, express their emotions through the arts of music, acting, and versemaking. Music, the preferred type of entertainment, forms an inherent part of Khmer daily life. They sing spontaneously while working at home or in the fields and during their leisure time. Their songs comprise improvised and ancient tunes; the latter, both comical and melancholy, are learned by heart and transmitted from generation to generation. In the evening, a group of singers often presents a concert while those in the audience clap their hands in rhythm; amateur musicians sometimes accompany them. Orchestras accompany all festivals and rituals, each moment of the ceremony having its own special tune.[23]

---

* A fish paste, which forms the base of many soups and is kept from one season to the next.

Theatrical productions presented by troupes of itinerant actors are a popularized version of the famed Khmer dancing now principally confined to the Court of Cambodia. Every troupe includes musicians, stage helpers, and a kru who wards off any ill health and bad luck which might plague the group. He guards the masks worn by the actors and offers invocations and gifts to them. The troupe presents a sort of ballet—a melodrama interspersed with dance scenes—in which the actors are given a theme to guide their improvisations.[24]

In some areas, versemaking takes the form of alternating chants, an ancient form of entertainment whereby men and women engage in rhymed repartee, combining riddles with quotations of poetry. Each group begins by linking its first rhyme with the final rhyme of the preceding group, exchanging at each turn a scarf rolled into a ball.[25]

Other forms of entertainment include kiteflying, gambling, and fishing. Kiteflying once served as an offering to the heavenly spirits, but merely provides a source of amusement today. A little three-noted organ attached to the kite produces mournful sounds when the wind blows over it.[26] The Khmer are avid gamblers and often risk losing a year's earnings in a single night of gambling, which takes the form of roulette, cards (especially poker), cockfighting, and chess.[27] Fishing and basket weaving are popular with the whole family, serving as a means of relaxation during the workday in the ricefields.[28]

Children sing and compete in games of skill. A form of battledore and shuttlecock is played almost everywhere; the shuttlecock is thrown and caught with the side of the foot. Sometimes at night, two groups of children armed with sticks attempt to push a piece of lighted wood to the opposing camp. Ballplaying is popular near towns, the ball being made of rags.[29]

Attitudes Toward Women

As soon as the Khmer girl reaches the age of puberty, she begins to lead a sequestered, closely supervised existence. She withdraws from society for a varying period of time, called the "Retreat Into the Shadows"; her emergence from this confinement is marked by a ceremony which in effect announces her readiness to marry.* The Khmer girl is expected to lead a chaste life until her marriage; should she disobey the moral codes and become pregnant out of wedlock, she brings shame upon her entire family. Married or unmarried, she is expected to be modest at all times. Adultery committed by a wife—but not the husband—is just cause for divorce.

---

* See "Child-Rearing Practices," p. 1073.

Women hold respected positions in Khmer society and in the home. They are legally subject to their husband's desires, yet they share equally in important family decisions.†

Etiquette

When greeting each other, the Khmer traditionally place their hands together at lip level and execute a half bow. The higher the hands are raised, the greater the expression of deference. A child before an adult, an adult before a superior, repeats this gesture a number of times. The Khmer rarely shake hands among themselves, but may do so with Westerners. It is considered especially rude for a younger Khmer man to shake hands with an older one.

Inside a house, people usually sit while talking. It is considered ill mannered for a younger person to stand while conversing with an older person who is seated; but a young person may talk, while seated, to an older person who is standing. A young man may talk with an older person when standing on the street or in the market place, but he must bend his upper body and neither stand up straight nor come too close.

For magico-religious reasons, the Khmer do not pat children on the head and do not like outsiders to do so. They believe that the "life-essence" or "soul stuff" of the individual is planted in the head and can be easily injured. Children's names are generally not mentioned, for fear of drawing the attention of evil spirits and thereby inviting misfortune.[30]

Before mentioning a proper name, an appropriate term designating age, rank, or sex of the person being addressed is used. The names of male children, when used, are preceded by an "A," which is a term of scorn when applied to an adult, but which becomes benevolent when used by a father toward a son or when a master uses it paternally toward his servants.[31]

Rules of courtesy require that a man speaking with someone of higher rank lower his eyes; the same applies to a woman speaking with a man. Friends and relatives, however, do not abide by this rule. A woman, according to Buddhist doctrine, should never attract the glance of a monk or engage in light conversation with him: conversations between women and monks do occur, but usually pertain to religion or to serious problems. When contributing alms to the monk, the Khmer woman lowers her eyes and assumes an attitude of complete quiet and restraint.

In formal conversation, the woman's proper position for conversation is to be seated, with legs bent to the left, hands together. Men may assume this position but may also converse from a squatting position. Gesticulation of the hands is avoided, as is all body contact—a slap on the back, for example.

---

† See "Position of Women," p. 1068.

In conversation, it is acceptable to interrupt a speaker, but disagreement with or sudden criticism of what has been said may arouse suspicion toward the challenger.[32]

Customs Relating to Outsiders

The Khmer are a polite, friendly people; they treat a stranger with utmost hospitality once they realize he has no evil intentions toward them.* When a stranger arrives in a rural Khmer settlement, the inhabitants will rush out to meet him and ask why he has come to this particular hamlet. If his answer is sufficiently reassuring, he may be invited into the temple compound and directed to the sala, the building where weary travelers may rest and receive a glass of water or a bowl of rice from the monks. If invited into a private dwelling, the visitor, in some areas, is expected to remove his shoes before sitting on the mat spread on the floor.[33]

The laws of Khmer hospitality dictate that before any conversation with a stranger can take place, he must drink the coconut milk offered him by the family. After the initial exchange of salutations, a young son will bring a fresh coconut. The family will offer the visitor whatever food or beverage they have. The visitor is expected to accept it, even if he does not want it, realizing that the offer emanates from a sincerely generous heart.[34] A visitor will not stay overnight in a Khmer dwelling, but will be escorted to the sala and will be given a mat on which to sleep.[35]

A natural alliance appears to bind the Cham and the Khmer; both groups, descendants of great, ancient empires, espoused the religious practices, customs, and mores of Indian civilization in their early history. Now both are minority groups, struggling to eke out a living and to retain their cultural identity. Theirs is a symbiotic relationship. The Khmer, for example, raise cattle, but, in accordance with their religion, refuse to slaughter them; the Cham drive the animals to market, slaughter them, and collect the profits. The Cham and Khmer, however, seldom intermarry.[36]

The Khmer consider the Chinese intelligent and exceptionally astute in business. Ironically, the small Khmer farmer remains perpetually indebted to the Chinese merchants. Without capital to modernize his farming practices, the Khmer farmer is dependent on the Chinese merchant for seed and for transportation of his produce to market. Hence, the merchant is in a position to fix his own price. He lends the farmer seed, cloth, or food and at harvest-time expects reimbursement at a high rate of interest (sometimes as much as 100 percent). Despite this relationship, the Khmer and

---

* See "Psychological Characteristics," p. 1065.

Chinese maintain a pleasant rapport and frequently intermarry.[37]

Customs Relating to Warfare

From antiquity, warfare has occupied a prominent position in the life of the Khmer. They waged both offensive and defensive wars against the neighboring Cham, Vietnamese, and Siamese. The French recruited many Khmer soldiers to fight the Viet Minh during the Indochina War. Currently, a sizeable number of Khmer are serving in the ranks of the Vietnamese National Army.

The Vietnamese Government also employs able-bodied Khmer men to serve as Provincial Guards, a sort of local militia organized to combat banditry and subversive groups in and near Khmer settlements.*

---

* See "Paramilitary Capabilities," p. 1107.

SECTION VI

RELIGION

The majority of the Khmer subscribe to a religion based essentially on the dogma of Theravada Buddhism rather than that of Mahayana Buddhism, the doctrine espoused by most of the Chinese and Vietnamese. This form of Buddhism, also called Hinayana (Little Vehicle) Buddhism is also practiced in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, and Ceylon.

According to Buddhist doctrine, worldly life cannot give eternal happiness. The extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification are to be avoided in favor of The Middle Way which alone can produce true insight, knowledge, tranquility, and Nirvana. Deliverance from universal suffering can be achieved by rightness of thought, conduct, and inner discipline. Buddhism denies the existence of a permanent soul or self that transmigrates unaltered from one life to the next. The individual encompasses five groups of changing components: corporeality, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. The whole universe is in continuous flux, with no fixed underlying essence. All is subject to universal causality, the law of deeds, karma or *kamma*, by which each act results in an inevitable end. Hence good deeds produce good results; evil deeds, evil results. By following the teachings of Buddha, personal change can be directed upward through successive lives toward the goal of Nirvana, a transcendent state where suffering, desire, and sorrow cease.[1]

A brief explanation of the Buddhist conception of man is given here as background information. Buddhist texts extol the virtues of being human; man alone is capable of acquiring supreme understanding and of rising to a moral level worthy of being "the master of one of the worlds." Such a position is unattainable by inferior beings concerned solely with satisfying their basic needs. Superior beings are equally excluded, for they are too absorbed with immediate joys to abandon themselves to contemplation. For this reason, it is all important to be born a human being. In our transmigratory existence, we are born hundreds of times in many forms, but rarely in human form. Men must, therefore, take full advantage of their brief human existence. They have the inherent capacity to probe the cosmos and discover its deepest truths. Only one being has reached the elevated state of Nirvana—Buddha, the best of men and the most evolved of beings. Those who reach the highest moral, spiritual, and intellectual level—*bouddha-bhava*—differ as much from men, as men do from animals. These summits are reached only by men who have worked to develop their abilities throughout their many lives. Every being, therefore, has the innate possibility of becoming a bouddha-bhava. For this reason, man must be humble, optimistic, and refrain from killing any being whatsoever.[2]

Disagreements developing within the Sangha (the order of monks established by Gautama Buddha himself) after Buddha's death resulted in the split of Buddhism into two schools: Theravada and Mahayana, conservative and liberal, respectively. Changes in interpretation of Buddha's teachings prompted the Mahayanists to call their own school the Great Vehicle (that is, conveyance) to salvation and the earlier, orthodox Theravada teaching the Hinayana or Little Vehicle, a name suggesting inferiority and shallowness.

Major differences characterize the Theravada ideas revealed by Pali texts and Mahayana beliefs set forth in Sanskrit tradition.

Theravadans honor most deeply the personality and teachings *(dhamma)*, of the historic Buddha and the order he founded—Sangha. Mahayanists recognize Gautama Buddha as only one of many Buddhas who have appeared, all being manifestations of one Buddha nature, and teaching variously according to needs of beings in their different realms.

Theravadans believe that the ideal Buddhist is a follower of the teachings of Buddha, the layman going as far as he can, the monk striving further to fulfill all conditions for the perfected saint whose goodness is manifested in universal love.. To the Mahayanists, the ideal Buddhist is a Bodhisattva, that is, one vowed to become a Buddha, inspired by great compassion to work for the good of others through perfecting himself in the six virtues *(paramita)* of generosity, morality, patience, vigor, concentration (in meditation), and wisdom.

According to Theravadans, each Buddhist devises his own salvation by following the ways of Buddha. Mahayanists hold that supramundane Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, endowed with mercy, goodness, and unbounded readiness to help, may be called upon to assist in this intent.

Theravadans believe that faith is essentially confidence in truth, taught by the Buddha, and gradually achieved oneself. Faith, to Mahayanists, is trust in the availability of merit transferred from a superhuman Buddha or Bodhisattva whom one worships with devotion and gratitude.[3]

Buddhism is classified as an atheistic religion because "Buddha is not a divinity to whom one prays, but an example of supreme wisdom with which one seeks to imbue oneself through meditation before his image." [4] Yet the majority of the faithful Khmer consider Buddha a supernatural power whose good favor they must obtain by offerings or by conduct conforming to the precepts which he taught and which the monks transmit.[5]

In actuality, few Khmer other than exceptionally well-instructed monks know the Buddhist doctrine; the religion of the remaining Khmer takes the form of a popular devotion limited to simple ritualistic observances. To the average Khmer, the purpose of religion is to provide the individual with an opportunity to perform meritorious services, thus ensuring a better reincarnation. In this respect, to support the clergy is the most laudable activity of Buddhist laymen. Religious observance consists of making offerings of flowers, candles, and incense to the image of Buddha and attending the principal religious ceremonies at the temple.[6]

Theravada Buddhists surround their clergy with exceptional reverence, addressing them with a special vocabulary. As long as he wears his traditional saffron robe, the monk is considered sacred and inviolate. Even if a monk has committed a crime, he cannot be tried until he has first been defrocked.[7] The monks warrant the respect they receive by virtue of the exemplary, moral, and self-abnegating lives they lead.

Traditionally, all Khmer men, rich and poor, were required to spend some portion of their lives in the monastery as novices or monks, depending on their age. The purpose of this retreat from the world was to amass as many merits as possible to guarantee a better reincarnation. For centuries the monastery served as the center for all religious, social, and educational activity. With the advent of public education, however, its primary function, that of instruction, became secondary in importance. As a result, the custom of retiring to a monastery has been dying out, particularly in the towns.

The influence of the monks, however, remains supreme, especially in the rural areas. The monks preach among the laymen, and sanctify with prayers such domestic ceremonies as the cutting of the hair at puberty, marriage, birth, and funerals. In addition to their religious functions, the monks teach children the basic principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The fact that most monks are of peasant origin enables them to communicate with the Khmer and exert (though unofficially) a political influence over them.[8]

The monk is exempt from all public responsibility; he is not subject to conscription and does not vote. In theory he remains divorced from politics; he may not appear in court, serve as witness, or initiate legal action when robbed, beaten, or injured.

A non-Buddhist may become a monk by making the appropriate vows, thus automatically renouncing his own religion.

Traditionally, elaborate festivities, including a feast and a procession, accompanied the ordination of a neophyte into the clergy.[9] Ordination occurs only during certain months of the Khmer year, usually from April 15 to July 15; in years having thirteen months, ordination occurs sometime between April 15 and July 15. This period precedes Vossa, the holy season, which lasts three months usually from April 15 to July 15; in years having thirteen months, ordination occurs sometime between April 15 and July 15. This period precedes Vassa, the holy season, which lasts three months and coincides with the rainy season.[10]

When he is ordained, the novice vows to observe the ten principles or rules of the Buddhist faith, which are:

I. Do not kill.
II. Do not steal.
III. Do not sin against virtue.
IV. Do not lie.
V. Do not drink alcoholic beverages.
VI. Do not eat other than at times permitted.
VII. Do not assist at spectacles which excite the senses, such as dancing, singing, music.
VIII. Do not use cosmetics, perfumes, ornaments, and do not wear flowers.
IX. Occupy neither high chairs nor soft beds.
X. Do not touch silver or gold.

Laymen must observe the first five laws; monks must abide by them all.

The first rule explains why monks do not work in the fields; when working the soil they might accidentally kill a worm or an insect. Moreover, monks are prohibited even from cutting trees.

The third rule obligates a monk to maintain absolute chastity; he must neither meet a woman's glance nor stay alone in a room with her, nor be on the same path with her.

In accordance with the fifth rule, monks may not drink fermented beverages. Generally, a monk who is ill may drink alcohol if it serves as an excipient to a medicine, such as quinine wines used against malaria.

Monks may eat two light meals a morning: one at daybreak, the other just before noon; then may not eat solid food again until the following morning. But certain juices, orange or cane sugar, and tea are usually allowed. Even when he calls on a layman's family, the monk must refuse all snacks.

Despite the interdict against exciting the senses, many temples have small orchestras which play on festival days to regale the faithful.

Monks generally sleep on mats placed on the floor of their cells or *kaut* which are usually devoid of any furniture.[11] Only important priests may sit on elevated chairs.

A monk may not accept any gold or silver for himself, but he may do so for the temple. Since the temples depend on public support for their maintenance, visitors place donations beside the altar or give them to an intermediary, never directly to the monks.

The monks, awakened by bells at dawn, arise, bathe in a pond within the temple enclosure, recite their prayers, and clean their cells and the temple compound. At about seven, dressed in their saffron-colored robes, they emerge from the monastery in single file and, bearing their bowls, go off to beg for their food. When the faithful have filled the bowls, the monks return to the temple to pray and to eat. Prior to eating, they throw a bit of food on the ground for any birds or animals present.[12] Then they pursue their respective occupations, which include teaching the novices or children from neighboring hamlets (if the temple has a school), studying sacred texts, praying, meditating, or maintaining the temple. At about 11:30 a.m., the monks have their final meal of the day, which usually consists of a bowl of rice and a little water. After the meal, they wash their hands and brush their teeth until no trace of what they have eaten remains. They may nap until two o'clock when they return to their occupations. Traditionally, monks were forbidden to leave the temple confines after dark—except in emergencies when they had to tend a sick person.

In Cambodia and perhaps also in the Republic of Vietnam, there are elderly men and women dressed in white who want to observe the Buddhist precepts without taking vows. The women *(don chi)* resemble nuns in that they shave their heads and live as ascetically as the monks. They live outside the sacred enclosure but frequent the temple, assiduously doing services for the monks, sewing, and arranging the altar.[13]

The Buddhist religion comprises few rituals; no rites or sacraments correspond to those of the Christian church. The faithful come to the temple to dream and meditate before colored pictures depicting the life of Buddha, to hear the monks psalmodize the saga of Buddha, and to pray. They bring food to please Buddha and to provide nourishment for the monks. Generally, the monks play less of a role in the religious ceremonies than the achars or officiating laymen. Instead of intervening actively between the divinity and the faithful, the monk exemplifies the saintly life merely by his presence. When he does intervene, it is to recite prayers.

On the first and eighth days of the waxing and waning moons, *thngai sel*, the role of the monk as the vehicle of Buddhist law becomes more evident. Normal activity within the temple is suspended. The faithful, bearing offerings of food, fruit, flowers, and incense, gather to hear prayers and sermons. At these ceremonies, the monks exhort the congregation to live according to the teachings of Buddha, to adhere as much as possible to the first eight commandments, and to obey absolutely the first five. This preaching visibly affects the faithful, causing them to feel much improved as individuals. Everyone is especially charitable on those days. They avoid arguing and making unkind remarks. Some of the most devout abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages, others fast.

Within the life of the monastery, 2 days are especially important: the last day of the waxing moon and the last day of the waning moon. The monks fast on these days, which are marked by the reading of the *Patimokkha* and the solemn confession by the monks of their faults before all the members of the monastery. After sunset they assemble before the altar around the one who will read the Patimokkha and enumerate the 227 faults contained in this manual of confession. During the reading, each monk who feels he is guilty of one of the sins advances to the head of the monastery and, prostrating himself, confesses his sin. Depending on the gravity of the sin, the superior will either reprimand him or impose penance on him by asking his suspension or his expulsion from the order.[14]

The outstanding annual event in the Buddhist monastery is the Vossa, a 3-month period of retreat and fasting, meditation, and prayer, which corresponds to the rainy season. The monks may neither travel nor leave the order at this time. At the beginning of the retreat, the faithful laymen proceed to the temple bearing a candle which must burn continuously for the 3-month period. The end of the retreat is marked by another procession when the faithful go to the temple to offer saffron cloth with which to reclothe the monks as they emerge from confinement.

Coexistent and intermixed with Theravada Buddhism are native, animistic beliefs.* This mixture is evident within the temple proper where beside the statue of Buddha a small altar is often erected to the neak taa, local spirits.[15]

The earth, according to the rural Khmer, is dominated by all sorts of supernatural beings which affect every phase of life. Spirits or genies inhabit the waters, ricefields, houses, carts, buffaloes, and a multitude of other elements, objects, animals, and regions. There are benevolent and malevolent spirits; both must be appeased through appropriate offerings, prayers, and rituals. Today, just as prior to the advent of Buddhism, and even of Brahmanism, the Khmer worship the forces of nature. The sun, the moon, the winds, all have human or animal faces. The earth, the waters, and the sky or storms are particularly worthy of veneration: Nak supports the earth; the king of the Nagas, a many-headed serpent, haunts the waters; Indra, mounted on his white elephant, controls the storms.

---

* See Dr. O. Migot, "Le Bouddhisme en Indochine: pénétration, développement, diverses formes actuelles," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, for the historical explanation of this religious admixture.

The neak taa, or local spirits, are objects of a special cult. Each hamlet has its own hierarchy of neak taa who guard the crossroads, mountains, rivers, islands, and forests. In each hamlet a shelter, a house containing a statue of the neak taa, is erected on a pole or in a tree to honor the spirits. Red and white flags, emblems of the genies, are often attached to a pole near the house. This is only one of the dwelling places of the spirits; they may also live in a root, a stone, or in the ruin of an old statue.[16] Before the advent of Buddhism, the peasants sacrificed animals, and even human beings, to these irascible spirits; now, before and after every important human event, they bring offerings (rice, bananas, and flowers) to these spirits, burn incense on their altars, and pray to them. A person afflicted with disease may be cured by rubbing himself with water left overnight in a jar near the shelter.[17]

Evil spirits take many shapes. The *kmoch long* are ordinary ghosts; the *kmoch preay* are male or female carriers of plague. These may take the form of lights which wail and call like human beings and change the course of paths and the locations of crossroads to lead travelers astray. When they take animal or bird form, their cry foretells death or illness. A clever sorcerer may sometimes imprison them in a vial.

The *beisac* are tall and thin demons with mouths the size of the eye of a needle. These are condemned souls who wander the countryside in search of food. When they do not feed on excrement, they eat rice thrown on the ground to them or placed in a pitcher near a bush.[18] These beings, together with the *chmnuing pteah* or house guardians and the ancestral spirits, must be propitiated or exorcized by special rites.[19]

Religious Practitioners

In addition to the Buddhist clergy, the Khmer have a number of other religious practitioners. The achar is a priest and diviner who designates, by consulting horoscope and magical drawings, the days on which festivals can safely take place. Monks participate in the ceremonies, but only with prayers; the achar is the officiant. The achar is the principal actor at all rituals marking the important phases of a person's life; at births, he places a 3-day interdict on the house and determines the sign under which the child is born, a fact which must be considered before each occasion in the person's life. He shaves the topknot from a child's head, marks a girl's emergence from the confinement of the "Retreat From the Shadows," officiates at marriages, funerals, and house constructions. In short, he seeks to counteract the influence of evil spirits and so ensure the protection and prosperity of those who have requested his intervention.[20] The achar is capable of denying to the spirits access to certain places, but if they succeed in causing illness, he is powerless and must summon the shaman or kru.

The Khmer have recourse to several types of practitioners or sorcerers and sorceresses who have jurisdiction over particular beings or spirits. The kru, the most important, usually inherits from his father the ability to prevent and to cure illness, to find lost items, and to make charms and aphrodisiacs. The *tmop*, most feared of sorcerers, is a kru who specializes in magic capable of killing people from any distance.* Less powerful than the kru and tmop is the *bangbot*, either male or female, who can cover the body of a thief with burns until stolen goods are returned. By reading omens, the bangbot is able to divert evil spirits; like the kru, he can make amulets, but he specializes in philters to make their users either invulnerable or amorous.

The *ap*, a sorceress-ghoul, is able to cast spells that often result in death. Ghouls are rarely seen, but this one is easily recognizable; she has bloodshot eyes and at night takes off her skin and flies off with only her head, her intestines trailing behind.[21]

Each family has its own *rup-arak*, usually a woman, chosen by the *arak* or protecting spirit who is generally a distant ancestor. Araks are benevolent spirits, but are sensitive and fastidious about their rights. Disrespect causes them to seek revenge, and araks, both male and female, use the rup-arak as an intermediary through whom to transmit their desires to the living. She alone can communicate with these spirits and does so when a member of the family falls ill, seemingly because of a genie's vengeance.

On a certain day each year, the family honors its araks at the ceremony of Loeng Roung. When the spirit has entered the rup-arak, the audience asks for protection and appeals to the spirit to receive the offerings they have prepared. The rup-arak seeks to satisfy any preferences the arak is known to have; for example, if he uses alcohol, she drinks several cups of it; if he likes flowers, she rubs her face in them to absorb their fragrance.

The neak taa, as noted, are objects of a special cult. Special offerings are made to these local spirits, who are endowed with a variety of powers and who also make their wishes known through mediums or *rup-neak taa,* who perform rituals similar to those of the rup-arak.[22]

---

* See Guy Porée and Éveline Maspéro, *Moeurs et coutumes des Khmers*, pp. 225–26, for a description of some of the tmop's methods of killing people.

Rituals

Numerous rituals attend even the simplest Khmer activity; as, for example, the construction of a house. The achar determines a propitious date—houses may be built only on certain days of certain months—to initiate the building by considering the sign under which the owner was born. Only on particular days can the lumber for the house be cut. Special attention is paid to the number of knots or "eyes" in the wood. An odd number of eyes is considered auspicious, an even number unlucky. Hence, a piece of wood with three knots indicates that the owner will triumph over all his enemies; wood with six knots foretells discord within the household. The achar offers sacrifices to the spirit of the ground to appease the good spirits and drive the bad ones from the appointed site. The ritual centers on the master post which the achar wraps and unwraps, with appropriate invocations to the spirits.[23] When it is completed, the entrance into the house must occur on a day designated by the achar, and it is usually the occasion for a solemn procession and prayers to Buddha.*[24]

Religious Holidays

The Khmer celebrate the New Year (Chol Chnam) in mid-April, according to the tradition of the region. In Cambodia, and perhaps also in Vietnam, 3 days before this greatest event of the year everyone participates in cleaning his house and the temple. Within the temple enclosure, the Khmer place nine little hills of sand, one at each cardinal point and the ninth in the center, representing Mount Meru, center of the world. These nine mounds represent the cosmos. The faithful walk around each pile and throw a little sand, saffron, and rice on it to atone for each sin they have committed. On New Year's Day, the monks wash the statue of Buddha. In general, the New Year festival combines Buddhist ritual with agricultural rites to obtain rain and with rituals of propitiation to expel evil spirits.†[25]

Other Khmer festivals include the anniversary of the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha (Visak Bochia) in May; the entrance of the monks into retreat (Chol Vossa) in July; the festival to honor the dead (Prachum) in September; the emergence of the monks from the retreat (Cheng Vossa) in October; the giving of gifts to the monks and the temple (Katum) in October; and the anniversary of the last sermon of Buddha (Miak Bochia) in February. These ceremonies, observed in the temple, are attended by the faithful, who bring food, offerings, money, and incense as a means of gaining religious merit.[26]

---

* For a detailed description of rituals concerned with selecting the site for a house and initiating construction of the building, see Pierre Bitard, "Études Khmères," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, New Series XXX, 2 (1955), pp. 137–57.

† For a detailed description of the New Year festival, see Guy Porée and Éveline Maspéro, *Moeurs et coutumes des Khmers*, pp. 229–31.

SECTION VII

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The Khmer economy is primarily oriented toward irrigated rice cultivation. Rice crops, covering most of the land in the delta, provide 90 percent of the Khmer diet and most of the fuel and fodder for their livestock.

Many types of rice are planted; for example, in the Ca Mau region, an early maturing variety for harvesting in late November is preferred. The rice must grow rapidly, because brackish water threatens the crops at the end of the rainy season. Varieties of rice which can be transplanted twice are sown along the banks of the Mekong near Vinh Long and Can Tho. River and tidal water, reaching a depth of 40 centimeters, submerges the land during the flood period in October. In such deep water, the rice plant must have a long stalk (70 centimeters in height), achieved by double transplanting, which results in a longer growing period for the stalk itself. This type of rice has a long maturing period; it is sown in June or July and harvested in February or March. In areas having flood waters too deep for normal cultivation, as along the banks of the Mekong in the northern part of the delta, "floating" rice predominates. The seed is thrown on dry land during the dry season in March or April, and is submerged during the rainy season. This variety of rice is harvested in December or January.[1]

Khmer agricultural implements are very crude.* Oxen or buffalo draw plows and harrows. After the rice is harvested with small sickles, the grain is laid out in the sun to dry. The paddy is then put into baskets to be carried either by means of a bamboo pole or it is placed in carts drawn by buffaloes.[2] Threshing, either in the fields or in the hamlet, is accomplished with buffaloes or oxen. The women then winnow, clean, and store the rice until it can be husked and pounded.

Secondary crops are cultivated along the fertile depressions or *chamkars* on riverbanks; although the produce from the chamkars —tobacco, cotton, fruits, and vegetables—is primarily for family consumption, any surplus is marketed. The harvest in the chamkars is biannual, once in the dry season and once in the rainy season.[3]

---

* See "Sophistication in Use of Tools and Machines," p. 1079.

Water control in the Mekong Delta is accomplished by both natural and artificial means. Summer flooding of the Mekong never submerges the whole plain, since the waters are dispersed through the Song Hau Giang, the Mekong and its five channels, and through secondary streams which enter the Gulf of Siam.[4] A network of canals with low mud dikes provides gravitational irrigation and regulation of the flow of water into the paddies. When additional irrigation is needed, one of three types of manual irrigation implements may be employed: the sliding scoop, the scoop and tripod, and the pedal noria. The sliding scoop, a woven bamboo basket attached to a pole, is filled with water from a neighboring canal and emptied into the land to be irrigated. The same scoop, when suspended from a tripod and filled with water, is raised by pivoting about the point of suspension; it is then swung and emptied into the paddy to be irrigated from an adjacent canal. The noria,* worked by pedals, allows water to be carried by paddles from one part of the paddy to another.[5]

Predominant Occupations

The life of the Khmer revolves around the seasonal work of cultivation. During the rainy season, they are busy tending their fields and gardens; but during the five hot months of the dry season, the farmers must supplement their income by taking jobs in town, by fishing, or by engaging in small artisan industries.

The fishing is especially favorable in the delta where, from October to April, the waters of the Tonle Sap flow seaward, bringing much nutritious plant food on which fish can feed.[6] Most are content to catch enough fish to supply family needs; but surplus fish are sometimes sold in the local markets.[7]

Small artisan industries are important in only a few parts of the delta: at Go Cong, near Saigon, there is cotton weaving; basket weaving is practiced along the borders of the Plaine des Joncs;[8] water palm † leaves are sewn together in the Ca Mau region to make blankets *(slek chamlab)* and roofs for pirogues and houses;[9] pottery work is conducted in Bien Hoa.[10]

Exchange System

For most exchanges of goods and services, the Khmer use the Vietnamese piaster. The farmers sell for cash any produce not reserved for home consumption. When he lacks cash, the Khmer farmer borrows against his crop. Either he takes his goods to local markets himself or he trades through a middleman, usually a Chinese. When farmers are dependent on itinerant Chinese merchants for seed and the transportation of their produce to market, the latter often exact high prices for their services, thus keeping the farmers perpetually in debt to them.

---

* See "Sophistication in Use of Tools and Machines," p. 1079.

† Water palms grow only in the delta; products made from them are widely exported.

Property System

Large-scale development of the Mekong Delta dates from the last century, when the French constructed an extensive system of drainage ditches and canals. Throughout the colonial period landlordism and farm tenancy were prevalent, most large holdings belonging to a few favored French and Vietnamese. In 1954, 2.5 percent of the landowners held approximately 50 percent of the cultivated land; 80 percent of the land was worked by landless peasants, who worked plots of land of from 5 to 12 acres in size. Before 1954 no laws governed farm leases, rents, or loans; the tenants were at the mercy of the landlord, who could charge them high rents—often as much as 50 percent of the crop—and dispossess them at will.[11]

During the Indochina War, the Viet Minh lived off the peasants in the delta and in rebel-held countryside, imposed heavy tax burdens in grain on the peasants. The Viet Minh succeeded in coercing the populace and in convincing the landless peasants that they would own the landlords' property after the defeat of the French. Terrorized by the rebels, many of the landlords fled, and the peasants were encouraged to take over the land. The Hoa Hao and Cao Dai, quasi-military religious sects, seized much of the delta land along the Cambodian border and encouraged the peasants to occupy these areas.[12]

After 1954, the Republic of Vietnam initiated a program of land reform to reduce rents and to redistribute land. Rents were to be limited to no more than 25 percent of current average gross yield. Tenants would be assured security of tenure for a period of from 3 to 5 years. Large estates were to be broken up into plots of from 5 to 12 acres each and redistributed, preferably to the farmer already working them. The increase in Viet Cong action in the delta after 1959 reduced the benefits provided by the land reform programs.[13] However, the Khmer must have received some benefits from these programs, for today most of them own the land they work.[14]

Standard of Living

The Khmer standard of living is higher than that of the Cham, but lower than that of the Vietnamese. The Khmer appear content to grow enough food for their own consumption, with no wish for a surplus for trade. Indeed, in some remote areas, the peasants may have no revenue whatsoever, managing to subsist on the products they themselves grow or make. The peasant of the ricefield—the poorest of all—buys only a pair of oxen or buffaloes to help in the farmwork; the rest of his needs he satisfies through his own production. For working the fields, he makes a plow, a harrow, a hoe, a spade, and an irrigation scoop or noria. Domestic utensils made at home comprise a variety of pots—for salt, water, rice, soup or offerings—, woven baskets of all sizes, a trunk for storing clothes, and woven mats for sleeping.[15] Local vegetation functions in several capacities to supplement the articles made at home: vines serve both as string to tie things and as food for animals; banana leaves are used to wrap rice cakes, fish, and other foods and to serve as cups and spoons; banana stems furnish food for the oxen; bamboo shoots serve as straws, containers for liquids such as sugar palm juice and resin, and even as channels for irrigation.[16]

SECTION VIII

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

General Political Organization

The hamlet, led by a chief or mayor and an informal council of elders, is the important political unit in Khmer society. The chief is usually elected by the members of the hamlet. If the inhabitants so choose, the chief's position is hereditary, passing from father to son. The chief's duties consist of apprehending minor criminals; registering birth, marriage, and death statistics; making any decisions affecting the welfare of the hamlet; and, with the aid of the council, settling disputes.[1]

The Khmer Buddhist clergy, although lacking the hierarchical organization of the clergy in Cambodia, wield considerable spiritual and moral authority over the people. The monks are obliged by Buddhist law to divorce themselves from politics, but they undeniably exert considerable political influence over the Khmer populace.[2]

As part of its effort to integrate the Khmer into Vietnamese society, the Government has required the Khmer either to accept Vietnamese citizenship or to register as aliens. Some Khmer have been assimilated into the mainstream of Vietnamese life; but most, preferring to retain alien status, have remained distinctly Khmer, although surrounded by a Vietnamese majority. Unlike the Chinese, however, the Khmer have not been militant about preserving their culture; they have established neither schools nor newspapers of their own.[3] Officially, the Khmer are to be free from discrimination; Saigon no longer views the Khmer as problematical and sees no need for a separate minority policy for them.[4] The Vietnamese manner of referring to the Khmer—"Vietnamese of Cambodian (or Khmer) ancestry"—reflects the official belief that the Khmer are Vietnamese citizens who have for centuries formed an integral part of the Vietnamese nation.

Subversive Influences

The Khmer have often resisted Communist subversive activities which have threatened their way of life. When Communist infiltration is openly supported by the Chinese or Vietnamese, the Khmer appear to make a determined resistance. The Communists have tried to include a few Khmer in the superstructure of the Viet Cong organization.

SECTION IX

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Modern methods of public communication are still concentrated mainly in the cities and larger towns of the Republic of Vietnam. A few rural Khmer may have radios, but the majority of the population depends on word-of-mouth communication as the primary means of transmitting information. In the provinces, village elders and officials, military personnel, and religious leaders are chief sources of information.[1]

The temple and the marketplace, as foci of Khmer community activity, are key points of information dissemination. The monks are highly venerated and their advice is frequently sought. During their sojourn in the temple school, boys often establish lasting bonds of friendship with particular monks who may, in later years, serve as channels for relaying grievances which the people are incapable of doing for themselves. Bulletin boards, books, and perhaps newspapers and radios may be situated within the temple, which serves as a meeting place for the local peasantry.[2] Peasants selling their produce at the markets exchange bits of news and communicate to their friends and neighbors what they have heard.[3]

The Khmer tend to be tightlipped before strangers whom they do not completely trust, but they keep few secrets from one another. Information spreads rapidly throughout the community. Only within their own social strata do the Khmer talk frankly and openly; in conversations with people of superior status, they are polite but discreet.

The Khmer are reputed to seek hidden meanings in speech and action, perhaps because of the subtlety and flexibility of their own language. An idea may be expressed in a number of ways, with due consideration for the social status of those addressed.* Through context, and knowledge of the personality of the speaker, the listener finds clues to indicate the intended meaning. The nuances of the language are enriched by allusions to symbols and legends commonly known by the Khmer.[4]

In Cambodia, and doubtless among the Khmer of the Republic of Vietnam, word-of-mouth persuasion has proved to be a most effective psychological operations technique. Use of the Khmer language is important, although most of the Khmer understand Vietnamese. Face-to-face communication has been more successful in reaching the peasantry than have radios, which are impersonal and fairly scarce in rural areas. Loudspeakers have been used effectively in villages and cities.

---

* See "Language," p. 1054.

The Khmer relish information, but are suspicious of what they know to be propaganda. To gain the confidence of the Khmer, strict honesty about facts and limitations of knowledge should be observed. A pretense of knowledge is quickly discovered; for example, if a proverb is cited incorrectly, the Khmer will consider the speaker or writer to be pretentious and unqualified and they will suspect his motives.

The Khmer enjoy hearing discussions and like to have the speaker reason with them. Before accepting a particular action or an idea they must be convinced that it is advantageous to them and that it conforms to their philosophy and religion.[5]

SECTION X

CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

The Khmer accept innovation only if convinced that the results will benefit them and will not conflict with their philosophical or religious beliefs.

The Vietnamese Government has undertaken a number of civic action projects in the Mekong Delta. Included among these are intensive well-drilling projects to increase normally available quantities of potable water; the improvement of rice crops by the free distribution of improved seed to farmers in the area; and the establishment of provincial radio broadcasting stations to expand the national network.

Many civic action possibilities exist which could benefit the Khmer. Examples of such possibilities are the following projects:

1. Health and sanitation
   a. Provision of safe water supply systems.
   b. Eradication of malaria and other insect-borne diseases.
   c. Public instruction in sanitation, personal hygiene, and first aid.
   d. Rodent and pest control.
   e. Increased availability of medical treatment.
2. Education.
   a. Organization of additional schools for literacy training.
   b. Organization of vocational training schools.
   c. Increased distribution of textbooks and other instructional material.
   d. Increased language instruction in Vietnamese and English.
3. Agriculture
   a. Methods to improve crop yields.
   b. Improvement of cattle breeding techniques.
   c. Improvement of irrigation systems.
4. Public administration
   a. Training programs for local government officials.
   b. Assistance in organization of public services, such as agricultural extension services, medical and educational programs, which are available through programs promoted by the Vietnamese Government.

SECTION XI

PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Khmer soldier is reportedly loyal, good natured, robust, and, with good leadership, brave. Although he is generally not aggressive, experience has shown that when his way of life is threatened, he will answer the threat aggressively. Since most Khmer are of peasant origin and are accustomed to hard work and a minimum of comfort, the Khmer soldier can endure considerable privation. Many have great manual dexterity and can be trained as technicians.[1]

Military Experience

Since the founding of the Khmer Empire, the Khmer have waged both offensive and defensive wars against the neighboring Cham, Vietnamese, and Thai. In 1945, when the Viet Minh began to operate openly, the French recruited many Khmer soldiers to fill their regiments. Organized in homogeneous units and led by subaltern officers of their own group, the Khmer were excellent soldiers. They did not yield to fatigue and were courageous in combat.[2]

The Cao Dai,* with its headquarters located in an area heavily populated by Khmer (Tay Ninh), also recruited the Khmer for its armies.

Along the Cambodian border is a group of Khmer, who, after years of fighting and bloodshed, have turned more and more to banditry, pillage, and terrorism.[3] Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia has charged that the Communists, as early as the 1930's, organized a small number of these Khmer into fighting units. According to Sihanouk, this small contingent of Khmer auxiliaries was directed to infiltrate Cambodia to pillage and terrorize the populace.[4]

The Khmer are doubtless familiar with modern methods of warfare as a result of experience acquired through their association with the French, as well as through the military operations of the Viet Cong and Vietnamese Government forces in the delta region. Indeed, a sizeable number of Khmer are currently serving in the Vietnamese Army.

---

* An armed, politico-religious sect whose armies totalled 30,000 in the late 1950's.

SECTION XII

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE KHMER

Geographic Factors

The seasonal alternation of the monsoons governs all activity in the delta region inhabited by the Khmer. During the dry season —Vietnam's winter monsoon—which lasts from December to March, temperatures may drop to 78.8 degrees Fahrenheit. The northeast winter monsoon blows along the China Coast, bringing little moisture inland. In the dry season, overland travel is hampered by networks of canals and streams and by vast areas of swamp, rain forest, and marshland infested with snakes, leeches, and insects. During April and May precipitation increases; in June the rainy season or summer monsoon arrives from the south-southwest and lasts through October, with a maximum of precipitation in August, slight regression in September, and an increase in October. During the rainy season, extensive areas of the delta are flooded, reducing transportation to watercraft and amphibious vessels. Air operations are impeded by fog, low-hanging clouds, and torrential rains, and leeches swarm in the rain forests during this period.

Most of the delta is cleared land, but some portions are covered with rain forest. Camping in tropical rain forests presents problems not encountered elsewhere. When local inhabitants are not available to advise personnel on local camping methods, the following notes may serve as a guide:

Essential stores include an axe, a large knife (cutlass or machete) with at least a nine-inch blade, matches, a hammock, a lamp, a blanket, and food. Medical supplies might comprise an antiseptic, atebrin or quinine (for malaria), a laxative, aspirin, ferric chloride (for leech bites), and potassium permanganate (for possible snake bites).

Temporary shelters may be erected from half a dozen or more palm or wild banana leaves laid on top of each other and tied or wedged into the fork of a small tree. These shelters are protection against the frequent short rains in the dense forest.

For protection over a longer period of time, shelters are constructed according to the kind of sleeping arrangements needed.

For hammocks, a framework is erected, with vines for the lashings. Vines vary in pliability, however, and can be strengthened somewhat by twisting, which also serves as a test, for the weaker vines will snap. A ridge pole is raised on two forked sticks, and the roof, thatched with palm or other large leaves, is secured with vines. Tarpaulins may be substituted for leaves as roofing and tied to stakes driven in along the sides. In especially wet weather, one or more sides can be covered with palm leaves secured by lacing between slender stakes of bamboo. It is easier to shelter a large party by constructing several huts, each with room for four hammocks, than to build one large, unwieldy shelter.

When beds are used, a light framework supporting a thatched roof is sufficient protection. Beds are less practical to transport and more accessible to ants and other pests. A light blanket is generally adequate covering for the night.

Depending on the type of pests prevalent in the area, as well as individual preference, the clothing used may vary. Trousers provide some protection against ticks and mosquitoes but fail to deter leeches. Shorts are cooler and more comfortable in the tropical climate and facilitate the detection and removal of parasites. Gym shoes are the best footwear. Personnel are discouraged from going barefoot even in their huts. Most raincoats are ineffective in tropical storms, and any additional garment causes the wearer to sweat, so he is just as wet with the raincoat as without it. Hats afford protection in the rain, but are unnecessary within the forest where the sun is not hazardous.[1]

Health and Welfare

The nonindigenous personnel may be particularly susceptible to malaria, intestinal ailments, venereal disease, and typhus. Most of these diseases can be prevented, to some degree, by observing rules of personal hygiene.

1. To avoid malaria, take the following precautions:
    a. Camp at least half a mile from swamps, rivers, and irrigated lands—possible breeding places for the anopheles mosquito.
    b. Sleep under a carefully tucked in mosquito net.
    c. Keep arms and legs covered, especially after sundown.
    d. Carry fly spray when possible to kill mosquitoes and other insects in tents.
    e. Attempt to kill the mosquito larvae in water by using oils or poisonous dusts. When possible, drain bodies of stagnant water.
2. Intestinal ailments such as diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid fever, and cholera can be prevented by careful preparation and service of food. Water should always be boiled or chlorinated

before use; fresh milk should also be boiled.

3. Typhus and relapsing fever are transmitted by lice and, in some parts, fleas. These insects should be removed from clothing immediately.
4. If bilharzia disease (blood disease caused by parasitic worm) is known to exist in the area, do not allow unpurified water to come in contact with the skin in any way, since the worm embryo develops in the water and penetrates the skin.
5. Wash whenever possible and avoid walking barefoot.
6. Venereal diseases are common. Take no risks.[2]

Relations With the Khmer

A few suggestions for personnel working with the Khmer are listed below:

Official Activities

1. The initial visit to a Khmer hamlet should be formal. A visitor should speak first to the chief and elders, who will then introduce him to other important persons. On arrival, the visitor may expect to be asked what he wants and why he is there. Traditionally, the Khmer have associated outsiders with tax collectors or with those forcing them to change their way of life.[3]
2. Personnel should not, however, confuse the Khmer with the Vietnamese, even in conversation. He should remember, for example:
    a. The Khmer eat with spoons and fingers, not with chopsticks as do the Chinese and Vietnamese.
    b. The Khmer in general do not have slanted or Mongolian eyes.
    c. They are not members of a "yellow" race.
    d. The Khmer do not wear black trousers and conical, Tonkinese hats, as do the Vietnamese.[4]
3. Sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are essential in dealing with the Khmer. Promises and predictions should not be made unless results are assured. The Khmer usually expect a new group of personnel to fulfill the promises of the previous group.
4. Outsiders cannot gain the confidence of the Khmer quickly. Developing a sense of trust is a slow process, requiring great understanding, tact, patience, and personal integrity. To gain the confidence of the people, the outsider must avoid being impatient or too hurried, since the Khmer themselves are generally a quiet, slow-moving people.
5. An attitude of good-natured willingness and limitless patience

must be maintained, even when confronted with resentment or apathy.

6. Whenever possible, avoid projects or operations which give the people the impression that they are being forced to change their ways.
7. Local hamlet leaders should receive some credit for civic action projects and for improved administration. Efforts should never undermine or discredit the position or influence of the local leaders.

Social Relationships

1. The Khmer should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
2. Polite introductory conversation may include queries about local needs, the state of the harvest, the health of the cattle, and the attendance of children at the temple school.
3. A visit should be made to the monk-instructor at the temple school as a sign of respect.
4. The Khmer are a joyous people and are pleased if an outsider is jovial when the occasion warrants it.
5. Relationships with Khmer women should be avoided; the chastity of the Khmer woman is highly prized.
6. Aged men and women, highly esteemed by the Khmer, must be shown respect.
7. An outsider can frequently gain the confidence of the people, especially of the children, by distributing candy, matches, incense sticks, soap, cigarettes, or pictures. Outsiders have obtained important information by dressing wounds or providing very elementary medical services to the people, especially to the children.[5]
8. Outsiders should request permission to attend a Khmer ceremony, festival, or meeting from the persons responsible for the event.
9. An outsider should never enter a Khmer house unless accompanied by a member of that house; this is a matter of good taste and cautious behavior. If anything is later missing from the house unpleasant and unnecessary complications may arise.
10. Teachers should be careful to avoid seriously disrupting cultural patterns.
11. Outsiders should not pat children on the head, nor call them by name.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

1. The person of a monk is considered sacred and should never be touched, especially by an outsider.

2. The Khmer venerate their clergy and achars; outsiders are expected to do likewise.
3. The Khmer resent the use of the term "pagoda" to designate their temples or *wat*.
4. Money must never be offered to monks; Buddhist law prohibits its acceptance. If the visitor desires to give money he must use an intermediary, such as a layman or achar, specifying that it is a personal or official contribution for the maintenance of the sanctuary or for the development of the school.
5. It is considered polite, when entering a temple, where the visitor is usually received by monks of secondary rank, to ask to greet the head of the temple, usually a venerable old man. If he is dining or napping, however, it is courteous not to insist on this.
6. If the visitor wishes to discuss a particular matter with the inmates of the temple, he will be offered tea or coconut milk. He should accept it even if the cup is dirty or he is not thirsty, for the gift represents the generosity of the hosts.
7. If it is necessary to stay at the temple or to house personnel there temporarily, the men should be instructed:
    a. Not to be too noisy, especially during services.
    b. To construct any temporary buildings (latrines, etc.) outside the temple confines, even though the temple enclosure is large enough to accommodate them.
    c. To avoid killing any animal whatsoever within the temple enclosure, where animal life is as sacred as human life.

Living Standards and Routines

1. Outsiders should treat all Khmer property and hamlet animals with respect. Any damage to property or fields should be promptly repaired and/or paid for.
2. Learn simple phrases in the Khmer language. A desire to learn and speak their language creates a favorable impression on the people and is an important means of gaining their confidence.
3. Whenever possible, outsiders should try to provide some medical assistance to the Khmer. Medical teams should be prepared to handle, and should have adequate supplies for, extensive treatment of malaria, dysentery, trachoma, venereal diseases, and intestinal parasites.

FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Col. Frank O. Blake, Interview, August 1965 [Former Chief of Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Saigon]; Virginia Thompson, *French Indo-China* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 325.
2. Larry Palmer Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1951), p. 348.
3. Dong-Khue, "The Vietnamese of Khmer Origin," *Le Viet-Nam et ses relations internationales,* III, 1–4 (December 1958), p. 72.
4. André Leroi-Gourhan and Jean Poirier, *Ethnology of Indochina* (JPRS: 13652) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publication Research Service, May 4, 1962), p. 79.
5. Louis Malleret, *Ethnic Groups of French Indochina* (JPRS: 12359) (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, February 7, 1962), p. 20.
6. Canada, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Geographical Branch, Institute of Pacific Relations, *Indochina: A Geographical Appreciation* (Foreign Geography Information Series, No. 6) (Ottawa: 1953), p. 73.
7. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), pp. 43–45.
8. Pierre Gourou, *L'Utilisation du sol en Indochine française* (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945), p. 164.
9. Darby, *op. cit.,* pp. 44–45.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Thomas Fitzsimmons (ed.), *Cambodia* (Country Survey Series) (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1957), p. 40.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 52.
3. Frederick P. Munson, *et al., U. S. Army Area Handbook for Cambodia* (Washington, D. C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1963), p. 40.
4. Paul K. Benedict, "Languages and Literatures of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly,* VI, 4 (August 1947), p. 380.
5. Fitzsimmons, *op. cit.,* p. 57.
6. Benedict, *op. cit.,* p. 385.
7. Darby, *op. cit.,* p. 137.
8. François Martini, "La Langue cambodgienne," *France-Asie,* XII, 111 (August 1955), p. 428.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 438.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 435.
11. Munson, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 57.
12. Fitzsimmons, *op. cit.,* p. 60.
13. Munson, *et al.,* p. 56.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
15. Fitzsimmons, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
16. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), p. 177.
17. Fitzsimmons, *op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.
18. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
19. *Ibid.*; Fitzsimmons, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–15; Larry Palmer Briggs, "A Sketch of Cambodian History," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, VI, 4 (August 1947), pp. 345–63.
20. Blake, *op. cit.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Jean Delvert, "La Vie rurale au Cambodge," *France-Asie*, XV, 141–42 (February-March 1958), pp. 95-97.
23. Roger Teulières, "La Maison rurale vietnamienne," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXXVI, 4 (1961), pp. 672–73.
24. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 85; André Migot, *Les Khmer: Des Origines d'Angkor au Cambodge d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, 1960), p. 352; Simonne Lacouture, *Cambodge: L'Atlas des voyages* (Lausanne: Éditions Rencontre, 1963), pp. 30–31.
25. Louis Malleret, "La Minorité cambodgienne de Cochinchine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXI 1946), p. 26.

III. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Société des Études Indochinoises, *La Cochinchine* (Saigon: P. Gastaldy, 1931), p. 14; Dr. Georges Olivier and Henri Chagnoux, "Anthropologie physique des Chams," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), pp. 274–302.
2. George L. Harris, *et al.*, *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962), p. 177.
3. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 127–28.
4. Georges Groslier, *Recherches sur les Cambodgiens* (Paris: Augustin Challamel 1921), p. 61.
5. Fitzsimmons, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
6. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
8. François Martini, "Le Bonze cambodgien," *France-Asie*, Special Issue (November-December 1955), pp. 885–86.
9. Ruth Tooze, *Cambodia: Land of Contrasts* (New York: The Viking Press, 1962), p. 139.
10. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
12. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–14.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–21.
14. Frank M. LeBar, *et al.*, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 105.
15. Munson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 182–83.
16. Munson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
17. Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
18. Société des Études Indochinoises, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

19. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 323–24.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 348.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
22. Blake, *op. cit.*
23. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 338.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 348.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
26. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
27. Blake, *op. cit.*

IV. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–103.
2. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–26.
3. Canada, *Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, op. cit.*, p. 7.
4. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–102.
5. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
6. Henri Baudesson, *Indochina and Its Primitive Peoples*, translated by E. Appleby Holt (London: Hutchinson, 1919), p. 249.
7. *Ibid.*
8. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
9. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
10. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
11. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
12. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
13. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
14. Guy Porée and Éveline Maspéro, *Moeurs et coutumes des Khmers* (Paris: Payot, 1938), pp. 210–14.
15. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–103.
16. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–206.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 185.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
22. Malleret, "La Minorité cambodgienne," *op. cit.*, p. 29.
23. Blake, *op. cit.*
24. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 214–21.
25. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–103.
26. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–38.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38; Delvert, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
28. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

V. CUSTOMS

1. Groslier, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Société des Études Indochinoises, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
2. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
3. Groslier, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
4. Martini, "Le Bonze cambodgien," *op. cit.*, p. 895.
5. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
7. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
8. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 324–25.
9. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
10. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

11. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 324–25.
12. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
13. Groslier, *op. cit.*, pp. 137–38.
14. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
15. Raymond Beriault, *Khmers* (Montreal, Canada: Les Éditions Le Meac, 1957), pp. 99–101.
16. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
17. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–51.
18. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 323–24.
19. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
20. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
21. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
22. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.
23. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–47.
24. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, pp. 96–97.
25. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–43.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
28. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, pp. 49–50.
29. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
30. Munson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
31. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
32. Fitzsimmons, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62.
33. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 49.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 35–36.
35. Malleret, "La Minorité cambodgienne," *op. cit.*, p. 29.
36. Antoine Cabaton, *New Studies on the Cham*, translated by Basil Guy (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1955), p. 64.
37. Delvert, *op. cit.*, pp. 99.

VI. RELIGION

1. "Buddhism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, IV (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1965), p. 355.
2. G. P. Malalasekera and K. N. Jayatilleke, "La Conception bouddhique de l'homme," *France-Asie*, XV (1958), pp. 454–56.
3. "Buddhism," *op. cit.*, p. 356.
4. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Dr. O. Migot, "Le Bouddhisme en Indochine: Pénétration, développement, diverses formes actuelles," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXI (1947), p. 35.
7. Martini, "Le Bonze cambodgien," *op. cit.*, p. 881.
8. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
9. Martini, "Le Bonze cambodgien," *op. cit.*, p. 882.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 883.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 884.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 885.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 886.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 887–88.
15. O. Migot, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
16. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
17. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

19. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
20. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–94.
21. Porée and Maspéro, *op. cit.*, pp. 223–25.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–28.
23. Pierre Bitard, "Études Khmers," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXX, 2 (1955), p. 142.
24. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
25. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
26. LeBar, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

VII. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

1. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 275–76.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
3. Delvert, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
4. Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 275.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 268–69.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
7. Leroi-Gourhan and Poirier, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
8. Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 319.
9. Groslier, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
10. Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 320.
11. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 357–58.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 358–59.
14. Blake, *op. cit.*
15. Beriault, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–91.
16. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–41.

VIII. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

1. Blake, *op. cit.*
2. Maj. A. M. Savani, *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam* (Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre-Mer, 1955), p. 144.
3. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 254.
4. Joseph Buttinger, "The Ethnic Minorities in the Republic of Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence*, edited by Wesley R. Fishel (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 100.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES

1. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
2. Munson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
3. Harris, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
4. Munson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 199–200.

X. CIVIC ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

No footnotes.

XI. PARAMILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. Munson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 386.
2. Savani, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–47.
3. Blake, *op. cit.*
4. Norodom Sihanouk, "Le Communisme au Cambodge," *France-Asie*, XV (1958), pp. 192–206.

XII. SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL WORKING WITH THE KHMER

1. Darby, *op. cit.*, pp. 464–69.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 128–31.
3. Blake, *op. cit.*
4. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
5. Malleret, "La Minorité cambodgienne," *op. cit.*, p. 33.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baudesson, Henri. *Indochina and Its Primitive Peoples.* Translated by E. Appleby Holt. London: Hutchinson, 1919.

Benedict, Paul K. "Languages and Literatures of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly,* VI, 4 (August 1947), 379–89.

Beriault, Raymond. *Khmers.* Montreal, Canada: Les Éditions Le Meac, 1957.

Biasutti, Renato. *Le Razze e i Popoli della Terra: Europa-Asia, Vol. II.* Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1959.

Bitard, Pierre. "Études Khmères," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises;* XXX, 2 (1955), 137–62.

Blake, Col. Frank O. Interview. August 1965 [Former Chief of Foreign Broadcasting Information Service, Saigon.]

Briggs, Larry Palmer. *The Ancient Khmer Empire.* Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1951.

———. "A Sketch of Cambodian History," *Far Eastern Quarterly,* VI, 4 (August 1947), 345–63.

Brodrick, Alan Houghton. *Little China: The Annamese Lands.* London: Oxford University Press, 1942.

"Buddhism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* IV. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1965, 355–56.

Burchett, Wilfred G. *The Furtive War: The United States in Vietnam and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1963.

Buttinger, Joseph. "The Ethnic Minorities in the Republic of Vietnam," *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* Edited by Wesley R. Fishel. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, 99–121.

———. *The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

Cabaton, Antoine: *New Studies on the Cham.* Translated by Basil Guy, New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1955.

"Cambodia," February 27-March 7, 1965. *Kessing's Contemporary Archives: Weekly Diary of World Events.* 1965–1966, 20603–04.

Canada. Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Geographical Branch, Institute of Pacific Relations. *Indochina: A Geographical Appreciation.* Foreign Geography Information Series, No. 6. Ottawa: 1953.

Choinski, Col. Walter Frank. *Country Study: Republic of Vietnam.* The Military Assistance Institute, U.S. Department of Defense. Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Research, 1964.

Coedès, Georges. *Angkor: An Introduction.* Translated and edited by Emily Floyd Gardiner. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

———. *Les États hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie.* Paris: E. de Boccard, 1948.

———. "Littérature cambodgienne," *Indochine.* Paris: Société d'Éditions Géographiques Maritimes et Coloniales, 1931.

Cortambert, E., and Rosmy, Léon de. *Tableau de la Cochinchine.* Paris: Armand Le Chevalier, 1862.

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Delvert, Jean. "La Vie rurale au Cambodge," *France-Asie,* XV, 141–42 (February-March 1958), 94–104.

Dong-Khue. "The Vietnamese of Khmer Origin," *Le Viet-Nam et ses relations internationales,* III, 1–4 (December 1958), 71–89.

Duvernoy, Victor. *Monographie de la province de Long Xuyen (Cochin Chine).* Hanoi: Éditions Moniteur de l'Indochine, 1924.

Fall, Bernard B. *Le Problème de l'administration des minorités ethniques au Cambodge, au Laos et dans les deux zones du Viet-Nam.* Paris: Association Internationale de Science Politique, Cinquième Congrès Mondial, September 1961.

———. *The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963.

———. "Viet-Nam: Mosaic of Minorities," *Washington Post,* May 16, 1965, E–4.

Fishel, Wesley R. (ed.). *Problems of Freedom: South Vietnam Since Independence.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

Fitzsimmons, Thomas (ed.). *Cambodia: Country Survey Series.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1957.

Forbin, Victor. "Khmers et Cambodgiens," *La Nature,* LX, 2880 (May 1, 1932), 385–92.

Giteau, M. *Histoire du Cambodge.* Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1957.

Gourou, Pierre. *L'Utilisation du sol en Indochine française.* Washington, D.C.: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945.

Groslier, Bernard Philippe. "Histoire et ethnologie en Indochine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises,* XXVII (1952), 332–42.

———. *Indochine: Carrefour des arts.* Paris: A. Michel, 1961.

———, and Arthaud, Jacques. *The Arts and Civilization of Angkor.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957.

Groslier, Georges. *Recherches sur les Cambodgiens.* Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1921.

Hammer, Ellen J. *The Struggle for Indochina.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954.

Harris, George L., *et al.* *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Janse, Olav Robert Thure. *The Peoples of French Indochina,* Smithsonian War Background Series, No. 19. Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1944.

Khat, The Venerable Pang. "Le Bouddhisme au Cambodge," *France-Asie,* XVI (1958–1959), 841–52.

Lacouture, Simonne. *Cambodge: L'Atlas des voyages.* Lausanne: Éditions Rencontre, 1963.

Lancaster, Donald. *The Emancipation of French Indochina.* London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

LeBar, Frank M., *et al.* *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

Leroi-Gourhan, André, and Poirier, Jean. *Ethnology of Indochine* (JPRS: 13652). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, May 4, 1962.

Le Thanh Khoi. *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et civilisation.* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955.

Mai-Tho-Truyên. "Le Bouddhisme au Viet-Nam," *France-Asie,* XVI (February-June 1959), 801–10.

Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra. *Hindu Colonies in the Far East.* Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963.

Malalasekera, G. P., and Jayatilleke, K. N. "La Conception bouddhique de l'homme," *France-Asie*, XV (1958), 454–70.

Malleret, Louis. *Ethnic Groups of French Indochina* (JPRS:12359). Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, February 7, 1962.

———. "La Minorité cambodgienne de Cochinchine," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXI (1946), 19–34.

Martini, François. "Le Bonze cambodgien," *France-Asie*, Special Issue (November-December 1955), 881–88.

———. "La Langue cambodgienne," *France-Asie*, XII, 111 (August 1955), 427–35.

Migot, André. *Les Khmer: Des Origines d'Angkor au Cambodge d'aujourd'hui.* Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, 1960.

Migot, Dr. O. "Le Bouddhisme en Indochine: Pénétration, développement, diverses formes actuelles," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXI (1947), 23–38.

Munson, Frederick P., *et al.* *U.S. Army Area Handbook for Cambodia.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1963.

Olivier, Dr. Georges, and Chagnoux, Henri. "Anthropologie physique des Chams," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXVI (1951), 271–318.

Pelliot, Paul. "Mémoires sur les coutumes du Cambodge," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, II (1902), 145.

Porée, Guy, and Maspéro, Éveline. *Moeurs et coutumes des Khmers.* Paris: Payot, 1948.

"Saigon Now Plagued by Own KKK," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1965, A–9.

Savani, Maj. A. M. *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam.* Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre-Mer, 1955.

Schmidt, Wilhelms. "Les Peuples mon-khmer: Trait d'union entre les peuples de l'Asie centrale de l'Austronésie," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, VII, 3–4 (July-December 1907), 213–63.

Sihanouk, Norodom. "Le Communisme au Cambodge," *France-Asie*, XV (1958), 192–206.

Société des Études Indochinoises. *La Cochinchine.* Saigon: P. Gastaldy, 1931.

Teulières, Roger. "La Maison rurale vietnamienne," *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, XXXVI, 4 (1961), 661–79.

Tooze, Ruth. *Cambodia: Land of Contrasts.* New York: The Viking Press, 1962.

Thompson, Virginia. *French Indo-China.* New York: Macmillan, 1937.

United Nations. Economic Survey Mission to the Republic of Vietnam. *Toward the Economic Development of the Republic of Vietnam: Report.* New York: United Nations, 1954.

CHAPTER 25. THE INDIANS AND PAKISTANIS

Population and Location

Since the Indian and Pakistani minority groups in the Republic of Vietnam are small and are frequently lumped together with other Asian minorities under the general term "Hindus," it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics for them. Prior to World War II, the number of Indians in Indochina was estimated at 6,000, with the largest concentration in the area then called Cochin China and a smaller group in Cambodia.[1] In 1953 an estimated 5,000 Indians and Pakistanis were living in Vietnam. In 1963 there were believed to be "several thousand" Indians and Pakistanis in the Republic of Vietnam.[2]

These groups are concentrated primarily in Saigon-Cholon and in provincial towns where they engage in commerce and related occupations, often in competition with the Chinese.[3]

Origin and Emigration

A large part of the Indian population came from France's colonies in India; the rest are Moslems from Northern India, Chettyars (also called chettiars and chettys) from South India, and Parsees from the Bombay area.[4] The Vietnamese do not distinguish between the Pakistanis and the Indians or between the northern and southern Indians, but call them all "Malabars," the name of the western coast of South India.[5]

Indian emigration is "as old as the Indian maritime enterprise."[6] Some scholars believe that Indians had reached southern Indochina even before the Christian era.[7] According to Ptolemy's geography, by 50 A.D. Indian colonization and commerce in Indochina were already extensive. Early immigrants were largely traders in rare commodities; subsequent immigrants have been, for the most part, laborers, moneychangers and petty traders.

The greatest influx of Indians and Pakistanis occurred after the arrival of the French in the 1880's; hence, the Vietnamese associate them with the country's conquerors. In addition, many of these Indians were French citizens from France's colonies in India, and as such qualified for government posts closed to the Vietnamese.[8] On the other hand, the French attempted to control Indian immigration; in 1948 they levied on each Indian immigrant a "personal tax" in the form of an immigration fee. Although this tax was later rescinded because of protests from the government of India,[9] no Indian was permitted to enter the country unless someone already in Vietnam assumed responsibility for him.[10]

Political Activities

A source of Indian unpopularity in Vietnam was the allegedly unscrupulous moneylending practices—low security and high interest rates—of the Chettyars, who made up a large part of the Indian community. Moreover, the French accused the Chettyars of fomenting political disturbances in Indochina. The French used this as the reason for ordering five Chettyars to leave the country. The order was later rescinded, but not without first antagonizing the Chettyars.

During World War II the Japanese tried to rally dissident Indian elements to the Indian Independence League which they had organized in Indochina. This anti-British, anti-American Indian "freedom movement" was first established in Berlin in 1941 by Subhas Chandra Bose, a left-wing nationalist extremist. In 1943–45 Bose headed a "provisional government of free India" in Singapore, Rangoon, and Bangkok. This "government" organized the "Indian National Army" (Azad Hind Fouz) composed of Indian deserters, prisoners of war, and Indians domiciled in Japanese occupied British territories, to fight with the Japanese on the Burma front.[11] Several years later, Bose tried to raise a voluntary brigade in India, to fight the French in Vietnam.[12] However, the Indochinese branch of the "freedom movement" was of little significance because the Indian population in Vietnam was both too small and, on the whole, too poor to be of any substantial assistance to the movement.[13]

In September 1945, Radio Viet Minh made several appeals for Indian support. The following month it issued its appeals, in the name of the "Fighting Committee of the Revolutionary Peoples of Southern Indochina," to the Indians serving in the British army of occupation. In December 1946, Radio Viet Minh alleged that some Indians in Hanoi were fighting on the side of the revolutionists, and that Indians in Saigon-Cholon had sent 40,000 piasters to Ho Chi Minh as well as a "touching letter of solidarity." [14] However, two months later, Nehru declared that no Indians were fighting in Indochina, as far as his government was aware.[15]

Political Organization and Orientation

In the past, the Indians and Pakistanis were organized in "congregations" apparently based on religious orientation. The heads or chiefs of these organizations were the recognized representatives of the various communities and served as links between the groups and the Central Government.[16] When Ngo Dinh Diem abolished all congregations, the mosques and temples took over their administrative functions for the Indian and Pakistani communities.[17]

The Indians and Pakistanis outside their native countries are reportedly apolitical and content to live under almost any government. Whenever they have felt their existence had become unbearable in a certain place, they easily shifted to another Asian location and re-established themselves.[18] One of the reasons for this mobility has been the fact that most of the Indians and Pakistanis residing in Southeast Asian countries are men, many of whom maintain families in India; their residence overseas is temporary, as are their alliances or secondary marriages.[19]

Religion

The Indians are predominately Hindu and the Pakistanis are mostly Moslems. Marked cultural and religious differences separate the two groups. In the past, the Moslems were organized, at least in Saigon, in exclusively Moslem congregations. Only a few Moslems, most of whom are wealthy merchants, are Shiites who do not mingle with other Moslems; the rest belong to the Sunni, a more orthodox Moslem sect. There is a great feeling of solidarity among the Moslems who hold the same religious beliefs, attend the same mosques, participate in pilgrimages to Mecca, and have a spiritual rapport with the rest of the Moslem world.[20]

Economic Organization

Despite cultural and religious differences, the Indians and the Pakistanis engage in the same or parallel businesses, such as fabric bazaars, drygoods stores, pharmacies, grocery stores, jewelry shops, and restaurants. Many moneylenders, middlemen, and night watchmen and guards for apartment buildings and billets are Indian or Pakistani.[21]

Some occupational divisions have been noted among the Indians and Pakistanis. Under the French, a large number of Indians were civil servants employed as clerks, postmen, policemen, and registrars. The most important members of the Indian community, the Chettyars, were at one time organized in 120 business firms, primarily in the Mekong Delta; they controlled a large part of the export trade, owned a fourth of the country's riceland, and built rich temples throughout Vietnam. In the 1930's, when they began foreclosing on mortgages, the Chettyars became so unpopular that the French established their own credit facilities and threatened to deport some of the Chettyars. Consequently, before World War II, the Chettyars transferred 65 per cent of their capital out of the country. However, their investments in Vietnam were still substantial after the war.

Some Tamilians, members of the Dravidian race and mostly Hindus, are engaged in the piece goods business. Hindus from the United Provinces work as milkmen and cattle merchants. Sikhs, members of a Hindu sect founded in 1500 A.D. in the Punjab region, and Moslems are usually watchmen and guards. Sindhi merchants from Karachi (people, mostly Moslems, from Sind, India), engage in the silk and curio business.[22]

The financial success achieved by the Indians and Pakistanis has created some Vietnamese resentment. Hence, except for business contacts, the Vietnamese rarely mingle with them, making difficult their assimilation into Vietnamese society.[23]

FOOTNOTES

1. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 120.
2. "South Viet-Nam," *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia & Australasia,* edited by Louis Barron (New York: Worldmark Press, Inc., Harper & Row, 1963), p. 371.
3. Maj. A. M. Savani, *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam* (Saigon: Imprimerie Française d'Outre Mer, 1955), p. 163.
4. Thompson and Adloff, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
5. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
6. C. Kondapi, *Indians Overseas 1838–1949* (New Delhi: Indian Council of World Affairs, 1951), p. 1.
7. H. C. Darby (ed.), *Indo-China* (Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943), p. 135.
8. Thompson and Adloff, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
9. Kondapi, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
11. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, H. C. Raychaudhuri, and Kalikinkar Datta, *An Advanced History of India* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1956), pp. 991–992; "Subcontinent of India-Pakistan," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XII, (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965), p. 157.
12. Thompson and Adloff, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 129–130.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
15. *Ibid.*
16. S. A. Waiz (ed.), *Indians Abroad Directory*, 1934 (Bombay: The Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, 1934), p. 135.
17. Col. Frank O. Blake, Interview, January 1966. [Former Chief of Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Saigon.]
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.;* Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
20. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
21. Blake, *op. cit.*
22. Kondapi, *op. cit.*, p. 1; Waiz, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
23. Savani, *op. cit.*, p. 164; Blake, *op. cit.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blake, Col. Frank O. Interview. January 1966. [Former Chief of Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Saigon.]

Darby, H. C. (ed.). *Indo-China.* Cambridge, England: Geographical Handbook Series, 1943.

Harris, George L., *et al. U.S. Army Area Handbook for Vietnam.* Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, 1962.

Harrison, Brian. *South-East Asia: A Short History.* London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1960.

Indians Abroad 1945–1950. Bombay: Overseas Publishing House, 1950.

Kondapi, C. *Indians Overseas 1838–1949.* New Delhi: Indian Council of World Affairs, 1951.

Le Thanh Khoi. *Le Viet-Nam: Histoire et civilisation.* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955.

Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra., Raychaudhuri, H. C., and Datta, Kalikinkar. *An Advanced History of India.* London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1956.

Rajkumar, Dr. N. V. *Indians Outside India.* New Delhi: All-India Congress Committee, 1951.

Saggi, P. D. (ed.). *Indians Overseas Year Book & Who's Who,* 1952/53. Bombay: Overseas Publishing House, [no date].

Savani, Maj. A. M. *Visage et images du Sud-Vietnam.* Saigon: Imprimerie Francaise d'Outre Mer, 1955.

"South Viet-Nam," *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia & Australasia.* Edited by Barron, Louis. New York: Worldmark Press, Inc., Harper & Row, 1963, 371–380.

"Subcontinent of India-Pakistan," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* XII. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1965.

Thompson, Virginia and Adloff, Richard. *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955.

Waiz, S. A. (ed.). *Indians Abroad Directory,* 1934. Bombay: The Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, 1934.

INDEX

TRIBAL GROUPS

The Bahnar

Abandonment of the tomb, 23
Abortion, 21
Adaptability to change, 39
Adoption of children, 13
Administration
    Civic action projects, 39, 40
    French, 6–7
    Local, village, 35
    Republic of Vietnam, 7
Adultery, customs relating to, 18
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 32, 33
    Ceremonies relating to, 26, 28
    Civic action projects, 39
    Division of labor, 16, 32, 33
    Major crops and activities, 32, 33
    Slash-and-burn, 7, 32
Alakong, Map, 1
Animals, 3, 26
Arts and skills, 33
Beliefs; *see* Folk beliefs and Religion
Birth, customs relating to, 21–23
Burial customs, 23
Bonam, Map, 1, 4
Boutes, 1
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 26
    Child-naming, 21
    Death and burial, 23
    Marriage, 16, 17
    Puberty rite, 23
    Related to birth, 21
    Religious, 30
Cham, Map, x, 1
Cham-Hrui, 1
Chief, village, 35, 36
Children
    Activities of, 16
    Informal education, 16, 21
    Naming of, 21
    Treatment of, 21
Civic action
    Guidelines, 39, 40
    Planning, 39
    Projects, 40
Class structure, 15, 16
Climate, 2
Communication techniques, 38
Communists, *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
    Animals, 26
    Dress, 25, 26
    Eating and drinking, 27
    House construction, 27
    Incest, 17
    Outsiders, 27
Daily routine, 16
Death
    Burial customs, 23
    Ceremonies connected with, 23
    Mourning restrictions, 23
Defense, organization for, 41, 42
Deities, 29
Diet, 32, 33
Disease
    Healers of, 13
    Principal diseases, 12, 13
Divorce, 18–20
Dreams, 26
Dress, 25, 26
Eating and drinking customs, 27
Education
    Civic action projects, 39
    Formal, 21
    Informal, 21
    Military training, 41, 42
Endurance, 14
Family
    Authority within, 15, 16
    Importance of, 15, 20
Folk beliefs, 26, 27
Golar, Map, x, 1
Halang, Map, x

Health
  Civic action projects, 40
  Diseases, 12, 13
  Efforts to improve, 45
Helicopters, 26
History
  Factual, 5–7
  Legendary, 4, 5
Holidays, religious, 29
Ho Drong, Map, x, 1
Houses
  Ceremonies relating to, 27
  Construction, 9
  Social importance of longhouse, 7–9
  Structure, 7, 8
Hre, Map, x, 2, 4
Hroi, Map, x, 1, 2
Hygiene, personal, 12, 13
Indochina War (1946–1953), 7
Incest, customs relating to, 17
Inheritance customs, 20
Intelligence of tribe, 14
Jarai, Map, x, 2
Jo Long, Map, x, 1
Kinship system, 15
Kon Ko De, Map, x, 1, 4
Kontum, Map, x, 1
Krem, Map, x, 1, 4
Labor, division of, 16, 32, 33
Language
  Bahnar, 4
  Dialects, 1, 4
  Knowledge of other languages, 4
  Written, 4
Legal System
  French Colonial, 6, 35, 36
  Republic of Vietnam, 36, 37
  Traditional, tribal, 35, 36
Legends, 4, 5, 25
Leisure time activities, 25
Location
  Neighboring tribes, Map, x, 2
  Tribal subgroups, Map, x, 1
  Villages, 8
Manual dexterity, 14
Marriage, 13, 15, 16–18
M'nong, 1
Missionaries, 4, 31
Monetary system, 34
Monom, Map, x, 2
Monsoons, 2
Name, origin of tribal, 1
Numerical system, 24
Origin of tribe, 4, 5
Outsiders
  Customs relating to, 27
  Suggestions for official activities of, 39, 40
  Suggestions for promoting good social relationships, 43–45
Paramilitary capabilities, 41, 42
Physical characteristics, 12
Political organization, 35
Population, 1
Pregnancy, customs relating to, 21
Property system, 15, 20, 32
Psychological characteristics, 14
Puberty rite, 23
Religion, 29–31
Religious practitioners, 30
Rengao, Map, x, 1, 2
Rivers, 2, 3
Roads, 3
Roh, Map, x, 1, 4
Rolo, 1
Sacrifices, *see* Ceremonies
Sanitation, 13, 38, 40
Sedang, Map, x, 1, 2
Settlement, patterns, 7–9
Sorcerer, 13
Spirits, religious, 29
Souls, concept of, 26
Stieng, 1
Taboos, *see* Customs and taboos
Tattoo, 12
Terrain analysis, 2–3
Tolo (Tolotenir), Map, x, 1, 4
To Sung, Map, x, 1
Trade, 34
Transportation, 3, 38
Tribal folklore, *see* Legends
Tribal subgroups, 1
Viet Cong, 37, 41
Village, tribal
  Political unit, 35
  Population, 7
Water supply, 13
Wealth, 34
Weapons, 42

Administration
    Civic action projects, 77
    French, 58
    Local, village, 71–73
    Republic of Vietnam, 72, 73
Adultery, 65
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 68
    Civic action projects, 77
Animals, 68
Bahnar, 58
Birth, customs relating to, 65
Burial customs, 65
Ceremonies
    Death and burial, 65, 66
    Marriage, 64, 65
    Related to birth, 65
    Religious, 69, 70
Characteristics
    Physical, 62
    Psychological, 63
Children
    Attitude toward, 64
    Education, 65
    Naming of, 64
Civic action
    Guidelines, 76
    Planning, 76, 77
    Projects, 77
Climate, 56
Communication
    Civic action, 77
    Techniques, 75
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
    Animals, 68
    Birth, 65
    Burial, 65
    Divorce, 65
    Dress, 67
    Eating and drinking, 67
    Marriage, 64
Death, ceremonies associated with, 65
Diet, 67, 68
Diseases, 62
Divorce, 65
Dong Ha, 56
Dong Voi Mep, 56
Economic organization
    Agriculture, 71
    Exchange system, 71
    Property system, 71
Education, 65
Family, 62, 63
Folk beliefs, 67
French
    Administration, 60, 71
    Bru pacification by, 61
Geneva Agreement of 1954, 72
Health
    Civic action projects, 77
    Diseases, 62
    Practices, 63, 64
History
    Factual, 60, 61
    Legendary, 58–60
Houses, 61
Huong Hoa District, 55
Jeh, 58
Katu, Map, 54
Kha Leung, 55
Labor, division of, 63
Language
    Classification, 58
    English, 58
    French, 58, 75
    Vietnamese, 58, 75
    Written, 58, 75
Lao Bao, Map, 54, 55
Laos, 55
Learning ability, 78
Legal system
    French colonial, 72
    Republic of Vietnam, 73
Mai Lanh, Map, 54, 56
Marriage
    Customs, 64, 65
    Divorce, 65
Missionaries, 70
Monsoons, 55
Mountains, 55
Name, tribal, 58
Origins, tribal, 58
Outsiders
    Attitude toward tribal beliefs, 80
    Suggestions for personnel working with Bru, 80
Paramilitary capabilities, 78, 79
Political organization, 72
Population, 55
Pregnancy, 65
Property, 71
Quang Tri Province, 55
Religion, 69, 70
Rites; *see* Ceremonies
Rivers, 55, 56

Sacrifices, 63, 64, 67
Sedang, 58
Settlement patterns, 61
Social structure and society
    Extended family, 64
    Patriarchal, 55, 64, 72
Sorcerers, 63
Spirits, 63, 67
Terrain analysis, 55
Thua Tien Province, 55
Trade, 71
Viet Cong, 58, 72–74
Village, 63, 69, 70
Weapons, 78, 79
Yuang Sorsi (God), legend of, 58, 59

The Cua

Administration
    Annamese, 95
    French, 95
    Village, 106
Agriculture
    Basis of economy, 104
    Civic action projects, 110
    Rites connected with, 104
    Slash-and-burn, 97, 104
    Wet-rice farming, 95, 104
Arts and skills, 105
Bahnar, 94
Bong Mieu, 91
Buffalo, importance of, 105
Cac-lai, special traders, 95
Ceremonies, 103
Cham, Map, 90, 94
Champa, Kingdom of, 94
Chief
    Province, 106
    Village, 106
Cinnamon, important item of trade, 105
Civic action
    Guidelines,
    Projects, 110
Climate, 95
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos, 101; *see also* Taboos
Death and burial customs, 100
Decoration
    House, 96
    Personal, 99, 101, 105
Defense, 112
Diet, 102, 105
Disease, 98
Dress, 101
Eating and drinking customs, 102
Economy
    Agriculture and, 104
    Organization, 104
Education, civic action and, 111
Endurance, 99
Family
    Extended, 100, 106
    Social unit, 100
Halang, 94
Health, 98
    Civic action projects, 110
    Diseases, 98
History
    Factual, 94
    Legendary, 94
Houses
    Construction of, 95
    Description of, 96
Hre, 94
Incantations and invocations, 101
Individual characteristics
    Physical, 98
    Psychological, 99
Irrigation, 104
Jeh, Map, 90, 92
Kontum, Map, 90, 93
Language
    Classification, 94
    Knowledge of other, 94
    Written, 94, 106, 109
Legal system
    French colonial, 107
    Republic of Vietnam, 108
    Traditional, tribal, 107
Location, 91, 95, 96
Marriage customs, 100
Massif du Ngoc Ang, Map, 90, 91
Missionaries, 103
Monetary system, barter, 105
Mon-Khmer, 91, 94
M'nong, 94
Omens, 101
Origins, tribal, 94
Paramilitary capabilities, 114
Physical characteristics, appearance, 98
Plants, types of, 92
Property system, 100
Quang Ngai Province, Map, 90, 91

Quang Tin Province, Map, 90, 91
Rain Forest, 92
Religion, 103
Rice, cultivation of, 104
Rivers, 93
Roads, 92
Sacrifice, 99, 100
Sampot, type of dress, 101
Sedang, Map, 90, 94
Settlement patterns, 95
Social structure, 100
Sorcerers, 103
Spirits
  Evil, 99, 101, 103
  Good, 101, 103
Superstitions
  Abandonment of villages owing to, 97
  Illness, 99
  Omens, 101
  Practices, 101
Taboos, 102, 106
Tam Ky, Map, 90, 93
Tea, 104
Tin, 104
Tra Bong, Map, 90, 91
Trade, 105
Tra My, 93
Tran Dynasty of Annam (1471), 94
Tribal law, 106
Typhoons, 92
Utensils, household, 96
Viet Cong, 96, 108, 112
Village
  As economic unit, 104
  As political unit, 15, 106
  As social unit, 100
  Defense of, 112
  Location, 95
Wealth, 106
Weapons, 112

The Halang

Administration
  Civic action projects, 147, 148
  French, 142–144
  Local, village, 142
  Republic of Vietnam, 142, 143
Abortion, 134
Agriculture
  Ceremonies relating to, 140
  Civil action projects, 138
  Feasts, 138
  Major crops and activities, 140
  Techniques, 140
Arts and skills, 140
Bahnar, Map, 124, 126
Birth, customs relating to, 134, 139
Burial customs, 130, 134, 135
Ceremonies
  Agricultural, 140
  Birth, 134, 139
  Death and Burial, 134
  House construction, 136
  Marriage, 133
  Naming, 134
  Religious, 132, 138
  Sacrifice, 132, 138, 139, 140, 143
Characteristics
  Physical, 131
  Psychological, 132
Children
  Naming of, 134
  Treatment of, 133
Civic action
  Guidelines, 147, 148
  Planning, 147
  Projects, 147, 148
Climate, 126
Communication
  Civic action, 148
  Techniques, 146
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
  Eating and drinking, 136
  Dress, 136
  Punishment for violation of, 136
  Relating to houses, 136
  Violation of, 142, 143
Death
  Burial customs, 130, 134, 135
  Concept of afterlife, 135
Diet, 136
Deities, *see also* Religion, 138
Diseases, *see also* Health, 131
Dress, 136, 141
Eating and drinking customs, 136, 137
Economic organization
  Exchange system, 141
  Occupations, 140
Education, civic action projects, 148
Family, 133, 142
Halang-Doan subgroup, 125
Health
  Civic action projects, 148

- Diseases, 131
- History
  - Factual, 128
  - Legendary, 127, 128
- Houses
  - Ceremonies regarding, 136
  - Structure, 129
- Jarai, Map, 124
- Labor, division of, 133
- Language
  - Halang, 127
  - Knowledge of other languages, 127
  - Written, 127, 145
- Legal system
  - French colonial, 143
  - Republic of Vietnam, 143, 144
  - Traditional, tribal, 143, 144
- Legends, of tribal origin, 127, 128
- Literacy, 127
- Location
  - Neighboring tribes, 125
  - Of villages, 128
  - Terrain analysis, 125
- Marriage, 133
- Migration, 128, 143
- Missionaries, 128
- Monsoons, 126
- Names, 134
- Neighboring tribes, Map, 124
- Origins, tribal
  - Ethnic and racial, 127
  - Legendary, 127, 128
- Outsiders
  - Attitude toward, 153
  - Suggestions for personnel working with the Halang, 150–152
- Paramilitary capabilities, 149
- Physical characteristics, 131
- Political organization, 142
- Population, 125, 133
- Psychological characteristics, 132
- Religion, 138, 139
- Rengao, Map, 124
- Rituals; *see* Ceremonies
- Rivers, 125
- Roads, 125
- Sacrifice; *see* Ceremonies
- Sedang, Map, 124
- Settlement patterns, 128
- Siam, 128
- Slavery, 145
- Social structure
  - Authority, 133
  - Division of labor roles, 133
  - Family, 133, 142
  - Tribe, 142
  - Village, 142
- Sorcerers, 138
- Spirits, 125, 128, 132, 136, 138
- Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
- Terrain analysis, 125
- Tribal subgroups, 125
- Villages, tribal
  - Political organization, 142
  - Settlement patterns, 128–130
  - Social structure, 142
- Weapons, 149

The Hre

- Administration
  - Civic action projects, 199
  - French, 194, 195
  - Local, village, 194, 195
  - Republic of Vietnam, 194
- Adultery, 173
- Agriculture
  - Agricultural cycle, 189
  - Civic action projects, 200
  - Economy, 193
- Animals, 186, 191
- Annamese, 165, 166
- Arts and skills, 191
- Bahnar, Map, 160, 162
- Ba To, Map, 160, 163, 166, 190
- Binh Dinh Province, Map, 160, 162
- Birth, customs relating to, 174
- Bout, Map, 160
- Burial customs, 175
- Ceremonies
  - Death and burial, 175
  - Marriage, 172, 173
  - Related to birth, 173
  - Religious, 185–187
- Cham, Map, 160, 164, 177, 183, 189, 191
- Champa, Kingdom of, 165
- Characteristics
  - Physical, 169
  - Psychological, 170, 171
- Chief, village, 172, 194
- Children, naming of, 175
- Civic action
  - Guidelines, 199

- Planning, 199
- Projects, 199

Climate, 162
Communications
- Civic action, 199
- Techniques, 198

Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Cua, Map, 160
Customs and taboos
- Adultery, 173
- Animals, 183
- Birth, 174
- Burial, 175
- Dress, 177
- Drinking, 179–181
- Eating, 179
- Incest, 173
- Outsiders, 183
- Poisons, 182

Dak Sut, Map, 160
Death, 175
Diet, 179
Dinh-Diu (chief), 194
Dinh-Loye (chief), 194
Diseases, 169
Divorce, 173
Doc Lap Hre (Hre Independent Movement), 166
Dress, 177
Eating and drinking customs, 179–181
Economic organization, 189
Education, civic action projects, 200
Endurance, 170
Family, 161, 168
Folk beliefs, 178
French, 164, 166, 194, 195, 196
Geneva Agreement of 1954, 166
Gia Long, 165
Gia Vuc, 163
Health
- Civic action projects, 200
- Diseases, 169
- General conditions, 169
- Practices, 169

History
- Factual, 165
- Legendary, 165, 166

Houses
- Construction, 167
- Groupings of, 167

Hygiene; *see* Health
Incest, 173
Indochina War, 196
Japanese, 166
Jeh, Map, 160
Jewelry, 177
Kayong, Map, 160
Kontum, Map, 3, 160, 162
Labor, division of, 172, 191
Language
- Oral, 164
- Written, 164, 198

Learning ability, 202
Legal system
- French colonial, 194, 195
- Republic of Vietnam, 195
- Traditional, tribal, 194, 195

Le Thanh Ton, 165
Location, neighboring tribes, Map, 160
Marriage
- Customs, 172
- Divorce, 173

Missionaries, 188
Mo Duc, 163
Monom, Map, 160
Monsoons, 162
Nam Ngai, 175
Names
- Children's, 175
- Family, 175
- Tribal, 161

Origins, tribal, 164
Outsiders
- Customs relating to, 183
- Suggestions for personnel working with Hre, 203–205

Paramilitary capabilities, 201, 202
Poison
- Customs relating to, 182, 183
- In folklore, 178

Political organization, 194
Polygamy, 172
Population, 161
Pregnancy, 174
Quang Ngai, Map, 160, 161
Religion, 184–187, 205
Rivers, 161, 163
Rituals; *see* Ceremonies
Roads, 163
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Sedang, Map, 160, 164, 201
Settlement patterns, 166, 168
Social structure, 172
Sorcerers, 170, 175, 194
Spirits, 170, 177, 178, 184
Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
Tra Bong, Map, 160, 165
Trade, 191–192
Tu Doc (Emperor), 175
Typhoons, 162

Viet Cong, 196, 201
Viet Minh, 166, 194, 196
Vietnam, Republic of, 183, 194, 195, 196
Vietnamese, ethnic, 162, 165, 175, 195
Village, tribal
    Basic political unit, 194
    Location of, 167
    Political organization, 194
    Population, 161
    Social structure, 172
Wealth, distribution of, 192
Weapons, 201, 202
Widows, 173

The Hroi

Administration
    Civic action projects, 243
    French, 222, 240
    Local, village, 217, 239
    Republic of Vietnam, 240, 241
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 218
    Civic action projects, 243
    Division of labor, 228
An Khe, 217
Bahnar, Map, 216, 217
Birth, customs relating to, 229
Burial customs, 230
Ceremonies
    Death and burial, 230
    Marriage, 228, 229
    Religious, 235, 236
Cham, Map, 216, 219
Characteristics
    Physical, 224
    Psychological, 225
Cheo Reo, Map, 216, 217
Chief, village, 222, 227, 236, 239
Civic action
    Guidelines, 243
    Projects, 243
    Vietnamese Government and, 243
Climate, 218
Communications
    Civic action, 243
    Techniques, 242
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos, 232–234, 235
Daily routine, 230, 233
Death and burial customs, 230
Diet, 233
Divorce, 228
Dress, 232
Economy
    Importance of rice in, 237
    Organization, 237, 238
Eating and drinking customs, 230, 233
Education
    Civic action and, 243
    Military, 246
Elders, council of, 239
Family, 222, 227
Folklore, tribal, 233
Geneva Agreement of 1954, 239
Health
    Civic action projects, 243
    Diseases, 224
History
    Factual, 222
    Legendary, 220, 221
Houses, 222
Incest, 227
Information programs; *see* Communications
Jarai, Map, 222
Labor, division of, 228
Language
    Alphabet, 219, 220
    Classification, 217, 219
    Dialects, 219
    Written, 242
Learning ability, 246
Legal system
    French colonial, 240
    Republic of Vietnam, 240
    Traditional, tribal, 222, 239
Location, 217, 218
Marriage ceremony and customs, 228, 229
Missionaries, 236
Origins, tribal, 219
Outsiders
    Attitude of tribe toward, 225
    Suggestions for personnel working with the Hroi, 247, 248
Paramilitary capabilities, 245, 246
Poisons, 234
Political organization, 239–241
Population, 217
Property system, 227, 228, 238
Qui Nhon, Map, 216
Religion, 218, 235, 236
Rhade, Map, 216, 217, 222
Rivers, 218
Sacrifices, 227

Settlement patterns, 222
Social structure and society
    Authority in, 228
    Family and village, 228
    Importance of women in, 228
Sorcerers, 224, 227, 229, 236
Spirits, 225, 232, 235, 239
Surname, importance of family, 227
Taboos, 237
Terrain analysis, 217–218
Trade, 222, 238
Tribal law, 222, 238
Tuy An, 217
Tuy Hoa, Map, 216, 217
Viet Cong, 241, 242, 245
Vietnam, Republic of, 240–243
Villages
    Authority, 217, 239
    Autonomy, 217, 239
    Classes in, 227
Weapons, 245

The Jarai

Adaptability to change, 294
Administration
    Civic action projects, 294, 295
    French,
    Local, village, 289, 290
    Republic of Vietnam,
Adultery, 273
Agriculture:
    Agricultural cycle, 287
    Ceremonies relating to, 284
    Civic action projects, 294
    Division of labor, 287
    Major crops and activities, 287
Animals, 266
Arap; *see* Tribal subgroups
Attitudes, 268
Bahnar, Map, 256
Beliefs; *see* Religion, Customs, and Taboos
Birth, customs relating to, 274, 275
Burial, 276
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 284
    Birth, 274
    Death and burial, 276
    Marriage, 273
    Puberty rite, 275
    Religious, 284
Cham, Map, 256
Cheo Reo; *see* Tribal subgroups
Children
    Activities of, 275
    Informal education, 275
    Naming of, 275
    Puberty rite, 275
    Treatment of, 275
Chu Ty; *see* Tribal subgroups
Civic action
    Guidelines, 294, 295
    Projects, 294, 295
Clan
    Importance, 270
    Names, 271
    Regional nature, 271
Class structure, 270
Climate, 258
Closing-of-the-Tomb Ceremony, 276, 277
Communications
    Civic action,
    Techniques,
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs; *see also* Religion and Taboos, 270, 271
Death and burial customs, 276, 277
    Restrictions of mourning, 277
Deities, 25; *see also* Religion, 282
Disease
    Medical aid and, 267
    Principal diseases, 267
Divorce, 273
Dress, 281
Eating and drinking customs, 281, 282
Education
    Civic action and, 294, 295
    Formal, 275
    Informal, 275
    Military training, 297
Endurance, 267–268
Family, 270
Folklore, tribal, 281–283
Habau; *see* Tribal subgroups
Halang, Map, 256
Health
    Civic action projects, 294
    Diseases, 267
    General conditions, 267
History
    Factual, 261–263
    Legendary, 261
Ho'drung; *see* Tribal subgroups

Houses
    Social importance of longhouse, 264
    Structure, 264–266
Hroi, Map, 256
Incest, customs relating to, 270
Indochina War (1946-1954), 263
Infanticide, 275
Jewelry, 272
Language
    Jarai, 260
    Knowledge of other languages, 260
    Written, 260
Legal system
    French colonial, 291
    Republic of Vietnam, 291
    Traditional, tribal, 290
Legends, 261, 281–283
Location
    Neighboring tribes, Map, 256, 257
    Of tribal subgroups, Map, 256
    Of villages, 264
Manual dexterity, 267
Marriage, 272, 273
Migration, patterns of, 263
Missionaries, 285
Monsoons, 258, 259
Name, origin of tribal, 257
Neighboring tribes, relations with, 290
Odend'hal, 262
Origins, tribal, 257
Outsiders
    Customs relating to, 263
    Suggestions for personnel working with the Jarai, 269
Paramilitary capabilities, 296, 297
Physical characteristics, 267
Plei Kly; *see* Tribal subgroups
Political organization, 289
Population, 257
Property system, 288
Psychological characteristics, 268, 269
Puberty rite, 275
Religion
    Deities, 284
    Feast days, 284, 285
    Rituals, 26
    See also Customs and Taboos
Renago, Map, 256
Rhade, Map, 256
Rivers, 258
Roads, 258
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Sadet, 289
Second marriages, 273
Settlement, tribal
    Location preferences, 264
    Patterns, 264–266
Social structure
    Clan, 270, 271
    Family, 272
    Village, 270
Spirits, 283
Taboos
    Birth, 274, 275
    Burial, 276
    Clans and food, 271
    Epidemic, 283
    Hair cutting, 283
    Incest, 270
    See also Customs and Religion
Terrain analysis, 258
Trade, 288
Tribal subgroups, 257, 258
Viet Cong, 292
Villages
    Physical layout, 264
    Political organization, 289, 290
    Population, 264
Wealth, distribution of, 288
Weapons, 296

The Jeh

Administration
    Civic action projects, 334
    French, 313
    Local village, 327, 328
    Republic of Vietnam, 328
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 325
    Civic action projects, 334
    Major crops and activities, 325
Animals, 321, 338
Arts and skills, 325
Beliefs, 320
Burial customs, 319
Ceremonies
    Marriage, 317, 318
    Religious, 323, 324
Chief, village, 317, 327
Children
    Activities of, 318
    Informal education, 318

    Treatment of, 318
Civic action
    Guidelines, 333
    Planning, 333
    Projects, 333, 334
Communications, 332
    Civic action, 333
    Techniques, 332
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Cua, Map, 308
Customs and taboos
    Animals, 321
    Dress, 320
    Eating, 321
    House construction, 313
    Incest, 317
    Outsiders, 322, 327
Death and burial customs, 319
Deities, 322
Diet, 321
Disease, 315
Dress, 320
Eating customs, 321
Education
    Civic action projects, 329
    Informal, 318
    Military training, 330, 331
Endurance, 316
Family
    Authority within, 317, 327
    Importance of, 317, 327
Folk beliefs, 320
Health, 315
History
    Factual,
    Legendary, 311–313
Houses
    Ceremonies relating to, 320
    Social importance of longhouse, 313
    Structure, 313
Hre, Map, 308
Hygiene, personal, 315
Incest, customs relating to, 317
Information, dissemination of, 22
Interpreters, 332
Katu, Map, 308
Kayong, Map, 308
Language
    Dialects, 311
    Knowledge of other languages, 311, 332
    Written, 311, 332
Legal system
    French colonial, 329, 330
    Republic of Vietnam, 329, 330
    Traditional, tribal, 329, 330
Legends, 311
Location
    Neighboring tribes, 311
    Tribal subgroups, Map, 308
    Villages, 311
Marriage, 317
Migration, 314
Missionaries, 324, 332
Monetary system, 325
Monsoons, 309, 310
Origins, tribal, 311
Outsiders
    Customs relating to, 322, 327
    Suggestions for personnel working with the Jeh, 337
Paramilitary capabilities, 335
Physical characteristics, 315
Political organization, 327, 328
Population, 309
Property system, 319
Psychological characteristics, 315
Religion, 323
Rivers, 309
Roads, 309
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Sedang, Map, 308
Settlement patterns, 313
Society, importance of elders in, 317, 327–329
Spirits, 316, 320
Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
Terrain analysis, 309
Trade, 325, 326
Transportation, 334
Tribal folklore; *see* Legends
Viet Cong, 330, 331
Villages
    Defense, 335
    Physical layout, 313
    Population, 309
Water supply, 314
Wealth, 326, 327
Weapons, 335, 336

Administration
    Civic action projects, 373, 374
    French, 351, 369, 370
    Local, village, 369
    Republic of Vietnam, 369, 370, 373
Adultery, 358
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 348, 366
    Ceremonies relating to, 366
    Civic action projects, 374
    Division of labor, 366, 367
    Major crops and activities, 366
Animals, 363
Arts and skills, 351, 352, 363, 367
Ataouat (Ka-Taouat), Map, 348
Attitudes of outsiders toward Katu, 377
Birth, 358, 359
Blood hunt, 347, 351, 359, 362
Burial customs, 359, 360
Cao, Map, 346, 348
Ceremonies
    Acceptance of peace, 351
    Agricultural, 364, 366
    Birth, 358, 359
    Death and burial, 359, 360
    Marriage, 357, 358
    Religious, 347, 353, 364, 365
Chief, village, 347, 369, 377
Children
    Activities of, 359
    Informal education, 359
    Treatment of, 359
Civic action
    Guidelines, 373, 374
    Planning, 373, 374
    Projects, 373, 374
Climate, 348
Communications
    Civic action, 373
    Techniques, 372
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
    Adultery, 358
    Animals, 363
    Birth, 358, 359
    Burial, 359, 360
    Dress, 361
    Drinking, 363
    Eating, 363
    House construction, 351
    Incest, 358
    Pregnancy, 358
    Warfare, 356, 375, 376
Death
    Attitude toward, 360
    Burial customs, 359, 360
    Ceremonies connected with, 359
Defense, organization for, 375
Diet, 363, 366
Disease; *see* Health
Dress, 361
Eating and drinking; *see* Customs and taboos
Economic organization, 366, 367
Education
    Civic action projects, 374
    Desire for, 378
    Military training, 376
Family
    Authority within, 347, 357
    Importance of, 357
Folk beliefs, 361, 362
Health
    Civic action projects, 374
    General conditions, 355, 359
    Hygiene, 355
    Practices, 355
    Principal diseases, 355
History
    Factual, 350, 351
    Legendary, 350
Houses
    Ceremonies relating to, 353
    Construction, 351
    Furnishings, 352
    Social importance of longhouse, 353
    Structure, 351
Hygiene; *see* Health
Incest; *see* Customs and taboos
Information, dissemination of, 372
Jeh, Map, 346, 348
Jewelry, 361
Kinship system, 357
Labor, division of, 357, 366, 367
Language
    Desire to learn another, 350
    Katu, 350, 357
    Knowledge of other languages, 350, 372
    Written, 350
Legal system
    French colonial, 369, 370
    Republic of Vietnam, 369, 370
    Traditional, tribal, 369, 370

Legends, 350
Leisure time activities, 362, 363
Location
    Neighboring tribes, 347
    Tribal subgroups, 348
    Villages, 347, 353
Manual dexterity, 367
Marriage, 357, 358
Missionaries, 350, 365
Monetary system, 367
Monsoons, 348
Music, 362, 363
Name, origin of tribal, 347
Ngung Bo, Map, 346, 348
Omens, 357, 358, 361, 364, 365
Origins, tribal, 350
Outsiders
    Customs relating to, 377, 378
    Suggestions for personnel working with the Katu, 377
Paramilitary capabilities, 375, 376
Phuong, Map, 346, 348
Physical characteristics, 355
Political organization, 369–371
Population, 347
Pregnancy, 358
Property system, 357, 368
Psychological characteristics, 355
Religion
    Beliefs and practices, 364, 378
    Practitioners, 365
Rivers, 348
Roads, 349
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Settlement patterns, 351–354
Social organization, 347, 368
Sorcerers, 356, 365
Spirits, 359, 362, 364
Soul, concept of the, 364
Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
Tattoos, 355, 364
Terrain analysis, 348, 349
Thap, Map, 346, 348
Trade, 361, 367, 368
Transportation, 374
Tribal folklore; *see* Legends, Folk beliefs
Tribal subgroups, 347, 348
Vegetation, 348, 349
Viet Cong, 371, 372, 373, 375
Villages
    Changes in, 353
    Historical, 347
    Physical layout, 352
Warfare, 375, 376
Water supply, 352
Wealth, distribution of, 368
Weapons
    Capability for using modern, 375
    Traditional types of, 375, 376

The Koho

Adaptability to change, 420
Administration
    Civic action projects, 421
    French, 416, 417
    Local, village, 416
    Republic of Vietnam, 417
Adultery, customs relating to, 401
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 412
    Ceremonies relating to, 410
    Civic action projects, 421
    Division of labor, 400
Animals, 408
Arts and skills, 412
Birth, customs relating to, 402
Burial customs, 403, 404
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 411
    Birth, 12, 402
    Cures, 411
    Death and burial, 403, 404
    Marriage, 400
    Religious, 410, 411
Chief, village, 415
Children
    Informal education, 402
    Treatment of, 402
Chrau, Map, 388, 389
Civic action
    Guidelines, 420, 421
    Planning, 420
    Projects, 421
Communications
    Civic action, 419
    Techniques, 419
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
    Animals, 408
    Eating and drinking, 407, 408
    House construction, 408
Daily routine, 400
Death
    Burial customs, 403, 404

Ceremonies connected with, 403, 404
Deities, 410
Diet, 400, 407
Disease
  Principal diseases, 396
  Religious practitioners and, 411
  Sorcerer's treatment of, 397
Divorce, 401
Dress, 405
Eating and drinking customs, 407, 408
Education
  Civic action projects, 421
  Desire for, 398
  Informal, 402
Endurance, 398
Family, 399
Folk beliefs, 406, 407
Health
  Civic action projects, 393, 394
  Diseases, 396
  Practices, 397
History
  Factual, 393
  Legendary, 392
Houses, ceremonies relating to, 408
Hygiene, personal, 397
Incest, customs relating to, 416
Inheritance, 404
Irrigation, 412
Jewelry, 405
Kil, Map, 388, 389
Kinship system, 399
Labor, division of, 400
Language
  Knowledge of other languages, 391, 392
  Koho, 391
  Written, 391
Lat, Map, 388, 389
Laya, Map, 388, 389
Legal system
  French colonial, 416
  Republic of Vietnam, 417
  Traditional, tribal, 415, 416
Legends, 406
Location
  Neighboring tribes, 389, 390
  Of villages, 389
Ma, Map, 388, 389
Marriage, 400, 401
Missionaries, 391, 398, 403, 419
Music, 400
Name, origin of tribal, 389
Nop, Map, 389
Origins, tribal, 389
Outsiders
  Customs relating to, 409
  Suggestions for personnel working with the Koho, 424–426
Paramilitary capabilities, 422
Physical characteristics, 396
Political organization, 415–418
Population, 389
Property system, 414
Pru, Map, 388, 389
Psychological characteristics, 398
Religious practitioners, 411
Rien, Map, 388, 389
Rivers, 22, 390, 412
Roads, 390
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Second marriages, 401
Settlement patterns, 393
Slaves, 399, 413
Social structure, 399
Sorcerer, 397
Sre, Map, 388, 389
Suicide, 416
Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
Terrain analysis, 390
Trade, 413, 414
Tribal beliefs, 406, 407
Tribal folklore, 405, 406
Tring, Map, 388, 389
Viet Cong, 417
Villages
  Authority within, 415
  Customs, 405
Weapons, 422

The Ma

Administration
  Civic action projects, 461, 462
  French, 439, 457
  Local, village, 458
  Republic of Vietnam, 459
Adultery, 447
Agriculture
  Agricultural cycle, 455
  Civic action projects, 462
  Division of labor, 445
  Major crops and activities, 455
Animals, 452

Arts and skills, 455, 456
Birth, 441
Bride price, 447
Burial, 448, 449
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 454
    Death and burial, 448, 449
    Marriage, 446, 447
    Religious, 453, 454
Chief, village, 457, 458
Civic action
    Guidelines, 461
    Planning, 461
    Projects, 462
Climate, 438
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Communications
    Civic action, 462
    Techniques, 460
Customs and taboos
    Animals, 451
    Dress, 450
    Incest, 447
    Outsiders, 451
Daily routine, 445, 446
Death, 448, 449
Disease, 443
Divorce, 447
Dress, 450
Economic organization
    Agriculture, 455
    Trade, 456
Education
    Civic action projects, 462
    Formal, 439
    Military training, 464
Family, 445
Folk beliefs, 450, 451
Health
    Civic action projects, 462
    Diseases, 443
    Practices, 443, 444
History
    Factual, 440
    Legendary, 440
Houses, 440, 441
Hygiene; *see* Health
Incest, 447
Kinship system, 445
Labor, division of, 445
Language
    Classification, 439
    Knowledge of other languages, 439
    Written, 439
Legal system
    French colonial, 457
    Republic of Vietnam, 459
    Traditional, tribal, 459
Legends, 450
Literacy, 439
Location
    Neighboring tribes, 437
    Tribal subgroups, Map 436
    Terrain analysis, 438
    Villages, 440
Marriage
    Customs, 446, 447
    Divorce, 447
Missionaries, 439, 451
Monsoons, 438
Name, origin of tribal, 437
Origins, tribal, 439
Outsiders
    Customs relating to, 451
    Suggestions for personnel working with the Ma, 465, 466
Paramilitary capabilities, 463, 464
Physical characteristics, 443
Political organization, 457–460
Population, 437
Property system, 445
Psychological characteristics, 444
Religion, 453
Religious practitioners, 454
Rivers, 437, 438
Roads, 438
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Settlement patterns, 440, 441
Social structure, 445–449
Sorcerers, 445, 454
Spirits, 440, 444, 449, 451, 453, 454
Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
Terrain analysis, 438
Trade, 456
Tribal folklore; *see* Legends
Tribal subgroups, 437
Viet Cong, 459, 460, 463
Villages
    Location of, 437
    Physical layout, 441, 442
    Population, 437
Weapons, 463

The M'nong

Acculturation, 477–480
Adaptability to change, 507
Administration
    Civic action projects, 513
    Local, village, 507, 508
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 483, 506
    Ceremonies relating to, 506
    Civic action projects, 513
    Major crops and activities, 507
Animals, 480, 501
Arts and Skills, 507
Beliefs, 499, 500; *see also* Religion, Customs and taboos
Birth, customs relating to, 493
Bu Dong, Map, 474, 476, 515
Bu Nor, Map, 474, 476
Bu Rung, Map, 474, 476
Burial customs, 494, 495
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 506
    Death and burial, 494, 495
    Marriage, 493
    Religious, 504
Chief, village, 509
Children
    Informal education, 493
    Mortality, 493
    Treatment of, 493
Cil (Kil), Map, 474, 476, 477
Civic action
    Guidelines, 513, 514
    Planning, 513, 514
    Projects, 513
Communications
    Civic action, 513
    Techniques, 512
Communists, *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
    Animals, 501
    Dress, 498, 499
    Drinking, 501
    Eating, 500
    House construction, 482–488
    Outsiders, 502
Death, *see* Burial Customs
Deities, 504
Dih Brih, Map, 474, 476
Disease, 489, 490; *see also* Health
Dress, 498, 499
Eating and drinking customs, 500, 501
Education
    Civic action projects, 513, 514
    Formal, 493
    Informal, 493
    Military training, 515
Family, 492
Folk beliefs, 499, 500
Gar (Phii Bree), Map, 474, 476
Gar Cu, Map, 474, 476
Health
    Civic action projects, 513, 514
    Diseases, 489, 490
    Efforts to improve, 513, 516–518
    Practices, 489
History
    Factual, 482
Houses
    Ceremonies relating to, 483
    Construction, 482–488
    Structure, 482–488
Hygiene, personal, 489
Incest, customs relating to, 499, 500
Intelligence of tribe, 491
Jarai, 491
Jewelry, 499
Kinship system, 492
Koho, Map, 474, 479
Kuenh, Map, 474, 477
Language
    Knowledge of other languages, 479
    M'nong, 479
    Written, 479, 480
Legal System
    French colonial, 510
    Republic of Vietnam, 510, 511
    Traditional, tribal, 510, 511
Legends, 480, 481, 499
Location
    Neighboring tribes, 477
    Tribal subgroups, Map, 474, 476, 477
Ma, Map, 474, 475
Marriage, 493
Missionaries, 479, 480, 506
Monetary system, 507
Monsoons, 477
Nong (Dih), Map, 474, 479
Origins, tribal, 475, 476
Outsiders
    Customs relating to, 502
    Suggestions for personnel working with the M'nong, 513, 514
Paramilitary capabilities, 515

Physical characteristics, 489, 491
Political organization, 509–511
Population, 475, 476
Preh, Map, 474, 476
Preh Rlam, 474, 476
Prong (R'but), Map, 474, 476
Property system, 508
Psychological characteristics, 491
Raglai, Map, 474, 477
Rhade, Map, 474, 477
Rivers, 477
Rlam, Map, 474, 476
Roads, 478
Sacrifices, *see* Ceremonies
Settlement, tribal
    Characteristics of, 483
    Migrations, 483
    Patterns, 482–488
Spirits, 498, 499, 501
Stieng, Map, 474, 479
Taboos, *see* Customs and taboos
Terrain analysis, 477, 478
Trade, 508
Tribal folklore, *see* Legends
Tribal subgroups, Map, 474, 476, 477
Viet Cong, 483, 511
Villages, tribal, 483
    Legendary, 480, 481
Weapons, 491, 515

The Muong

Abortion, 542
Acculturation, 553, 554
Adoption, 542
Administration
    Annamese, 555
    Chinese, 555
    Civic action projects, 560, 561
    French, 533, 555
    Local, village, 555, 556
    Republic of Vietnam, 555, 557
Agriculture
    Civic action projects, 560
    Division of labor, 551–553
    Importance in economy, 551
    Major crops and activities, 552, 553
Ancestors, cult of, 547, 548
Birth, customs relating to, 542, 543
Burial, 543, 544
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 547, 552
    Marriage, 541, 542
    New Year, 548
    Related to birth, 542, 543
    Religious, 547–550
Chief, village, 532, 533, 539
Children, 540, 541, 543
Civic action
    Guidelines, 560
    Planning, 560
    Projects, 560, 561
Climate, 528–530, 538
Communications, 559
    Civic action, techniques, 560, 561
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs
    Dress, 545
    Drinking, 545
    Eating, 538, 545
    Family food, 538, 540, 541
    Outsiders, 546
Daily routine, 544
Death, 543, 544
Diet, 545
Disease, 536, 537
Divorce, 542
Dress, 545
Eating and drinking customs, 538, 545
Economy, 551–554
Education, civic action projects for, 561
Endurance, 537, 538
Folk beliefs, 545
Health
    Civic action projects, 561, 564
    Diseases, 537
History
    Factual, 533
    Legendary, 532
Houses, structure, 534
Hunting and fishing, importance in economy, 551, 552
Hygiene, personal, 536, 537
Indochina War (1946–1954), 546
Kinship system, 539, 540
Labor, division of, 539, 540
Language
    Knowledge of other languages, 532
    Muong and Vietnamese, 531
    Written, 531

Legal system
    Annamese, 557
    North Vietnam, 555, 556
    Republic of Vietnam, 555–558
    Traditional, tribal, 557
Legends, 532
Location, 528
Marriage, 541, 542
Missionaries, 550
Monsoons, 528–530
Name, origin of tribal, 527, 528
Opium, 546
Origins, tribal, 527, 531
Outsiders
    Customs relating to, 546
    Suggestions for personnel working with the Muong, 563, 564
Paramilitary capabilities, 562
Physical characteristics, 536
Political organization, 555–557
Population, 527, 528
Pregnancy, 542
Property system, 539, 553, 554
Psychological characteristics, 538
Refugees, 528
Religion, 547–550
Religious practitioners, 549, 550
Roads, 530
Sacrifices, *see* Ceremonies
Settlement, patterns, 533–535
Smoking and betel nut chewing, 546
Social relationships, 539-544
Sorcerers, 537, 549, 550
Sorceresses, 549, 550
Souls, concept of, 547, 548
Spirits, 547–550
Taboos; *see* Customs
Terrain analysis, 528–530
Tribal folklore; *see* Legends
Viet Cong, 555–558
Village, location, tribal administration, 528, 555, 556
Weapons, 562
Weaving and dyeing, 553

The Raglai

Administration
    Civic action projects, 595
    French, 590, 591
    Local, village, 590
    Republic of Vietnam, 591
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 588
    Ceremonies relating to, 588
    Civic action projects, 595
    Division of labor, 581
    Major crops and activities, 589
Animals, 585, 587
Arts and skills, 581, 589
Attitudes, 591
Beliefs, 573
Binh Thuan Province, Map, 572, 573
Birth, customs relating to, 582
Bojau, 588
Bumong, 587, 588
Burial customs, 583
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 588
    Cham, 573, 577, 589
    Child-naming, 581
    Death and burial, 583
    Marriage, 582
    Related to birth, 582
    Religious, 587, 588
Children
    Activities of, 581
    Informal education, 582
    Naming of, 582
    Treatment of, 582
Civic action
    Guidelines, 594
    Planning, 594
    Projects, 595
Communications
    Civic action, 595
    Techniques, 593
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
    Animals, 585, 587
    Dress, 584
    Drinking, 585
    Eating, 585
    House construction, 578
    Outsiders, 586
Daily routine, 583
Death and burial customs, 583
Diet, 583, 585
Disease, 579
Dress, 584
Eating and drinking customs, 585
Education
    Civic action projects, 595
    Desire for, 580
    Informal, 583
Family, 581
Folk beliefs, 584

Health
  Civic action projects, 595
  Diseases, 579
  General conditions, 579
  Practices, 579, 580
  Resistance to disease, 579
History
  Factual, 577
  Legendary, 577
Houses
  Ceremonies relating to, 585, 586
  Structure, 578, 585
Hygiene, personal, 579
Intelligence of tribe, 580
Khanh Hoa Province, Map, 572, 573, 577
Labor, division of, 581
Language
  Knowledge of other languages, 576, 593
  Raglai, 573, 576, 577
  Written, 576, 577
Legal system
  French colonial, 590, 591
  Republic of Vietnam, 591
  Traditional, tribal, 590
Legends, 577
Leisure time activities, 583, 584
Location
  Neighboring tribes, 573
    Tribal subgroups, Map, 572
    Villages, 573
Marriage, 582
Missionaries, contacts with, 576, 586, 588
Monetary system, 589
Monsoons, 574
Name, origin of tribal, 573
Nha Trang, Map, 572, 573, 574, 577, 586
Ninh Thuan Province, Map, 572, 573, 577
Origins, tribal, 576
Outsiders
  Customs relating to, 586
  Suggestions for personnel working with the Raglai, 597
Paramilitary capabilities, 596
Phan Rang, Map, 572, 573, 574, 578
Phan Thiet, Map, 572, 573, 574
Phu Yen Province, 577
Physical characteristics, 579
Political organization, 573
Population, 573
Property system, 589
Psychological characteristics, 580
Religious beliefs, 573, 587
Religious practitioners (sorcerers), 580, 588
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Settlement patterns, 578
Social organization, 573, 581
Sorcerer, 580, 588
Spirits, 573, 579, 580, 584, 585
Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
Terrain analysis, 573, 574
Trade, 589
Transportation, 595
Tribal folklore; *see* Legends
Tuyen Duc Province, 572, 573
Viet Cong, 576, 586, 588, 589, 592, 596
Villages
  Change of, 589
  Physical layout, 573, 574
  Population, 573
Weapons, 596

The Rengao

Abortion, 618
Administration
  Civic action projects, 637
  French, 612, 633
  Local, village, 630, 633
  Republic of Vietnam, 633
Adultery, customs relating to, 618
Agriculture
  Ceremonies relating to, 621, 622
  Civic action projects, 637
  Cycle of, 628
  Division of labor, 617
  Major crops and activities, 628
Animals, 620, 621, 624
Arts and skills, 629
Bahnar, Map, 608, 609
Beliefs, 620, 621, 624; *see also* Religion, Customs and taboos
Birth, customs relating to, 618
Burial customs, 619
Ceremonies
  Agricultural, 626
  Death and burial, 619
  Illness, 616
  Marriage, 618
  Puberty rite, 619

  - Related to birth, 618
  - Religious, 625, 626
- Chief, village, 632
- Children
  - Activities of, 617
  - Puberty rite, 619
  - Treatment of, 619
- Civic action
  - Guidelines, 636
  - Planning and projects, 637
- Class structure, 617
- Climate, 609
- Communications
  - Civic action, 636
  - Techniques, 635
- Communists; *see* Viet Cong
- Customs and taboos
  - Animals and plants, 624
  - Dress, 620
  - Eating and drinking, 623
  - House construction, 613
  - Outsiders, 623
  - Warfare, 638, 639
- Death, 619
- Deities, 620, 625, 626
- Diet, 623, 629
- Diseases
  - Ceremonies for, 616
  - Principal, 615
- Divorce, 618
- Dreams, 620
- Dress, 620
- Eating and drinking customs, 623
- Education
  - Civic action projects, 637
  - Desire for, military training, 639
- Endurance, 616
- Family, 616
- Folk beliefs, 620–623
- Halang, Map, 608, 609
- Health
  - Civic action projects, 637
  - Diseases, 615
  - Efforts to improve, 635, 642
  - General conditions, 615, 616
  - Practices, 616
- History
  - Factual, 611, 612
  - Legendary, 611
- Houses
  - Construction, 613
  - Structure, 613
- Jarai, Map, 608, 611
- Jeh, Map, 608
- Jewelry, 620
- Kinship system, 617
- Labor, division of, 617
- Language
  - Knowledge of other, 611
  - Written, 611
- Legal system
  - French colonial, 632
  - Republic of Vietnam, 633, 634
  - Traditional, tribal, 632–634
- Legends, 611
- Literacy, 611
- Location, neighboring tribes, 609, 611
- Marriage, 618
- Missionaries
  - Contacts with, 612, 613, 626
  - Medical aid by, 626
- M'nong, 611
- Monsoons, 610
- Name, origin of tribal, 609
- Origins, tribal, 609
- Outsiders
  - Customs relating to, 623
  - Suggestions for personnel working with the Rengao, 640–642
- Paramilitary capabilities, 638, 639
- Physical characteristics, 615
- Political organization, 632
- Population, 609
- Property system, 630
- Psychological characteristics, 616
- Puberty rite, 619
- Religious practitioners; *see* Sorcerers
- Rivers, 609
- Roads, 610
- Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
- Sedang, Map, 608, 609
- Settlement patterns, 613, 614
- Sorcerers, 616, 623, 626
- Spirits, 616, 626
- Stieng, 611
- Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
- Tattoos, 615
- Terrain analysis, 609, 610
- Trade, 630, 631
- Viet Cong, 634
- Villages
  - Authority within, 632, 633
  - Physical layout, 613, 614
  - Population, 609
- Water supply, 615, 637
- Wealth, 631
- Weapons, 638, 639

The Rhade

Abandonment of the Tomb ceremony, 677
Abortion, 670
Acculturation, 657, 658, 678, 697
A'dham; *see* Tribal subgroups
Adaptability to change, 657, 658
Administration
    Civic action projects, 702, 703
    French, 656, 657, 697
    Local tribal, 694
    Republic of Vietnam, 696, 697
Adultery, customs relating to, 669
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 691–693
    Ceremonies relating to, 690, 691, 692
    Civic action projects, 703
    Division of labor, 666, 667
    Major crops and activities, 689–694
    Tribal laws relating to, 692, 698
Animals
    Beliefs connected with, 679, 680
    Treatment of, 680, 703
Attitudes
    Desire to better their communities, 702
    Desire to learn, 665
    Importance of family, 665
    Toward medical assistance, 709
    Toward nature, 665
    Toward outsiders, 681
Ban Me Thuot, 651, 652, 657, 665
Beliefs; *see* also Religion, Customs and taboos, 678–681
Births, customs relating to, 664, 670–672
Blo; *see* Tribal subgroups
Blood price, 669
Burial
    Customs, 674–677
    Restrictions on site, 676
Ceremonies:
    Agricultural, 687
    Child naming, 672
    Death and burial, 674–677
    Marriage, 668
    Puberty rite, 674
    Related to birth, 670–672
    Religious, 687
Cham, Map, 650, 652
Chief, Village, 698
Children
    Activities of, 666, 667
    Informal education, 673
    Mortality, 670–672
    Naming of, 672, 673
    Puberty rite, 674
    Treatment of, 666, 667, 673
Civic Action
    Guidelines, 702, 703
    Planning, 702
    Projects, 702, 703
Communications
    Civic action,
    Techniques,
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Daily Routine, 667
Death
    Attitude toward, 674
    Burial customs, 674–677
    Ceremonies connected with, 674–677
    Concept of, 674, 676, 677
    Reporting of, 663
    Restrictions of mourning, 677
Deities, 685–687
Diet, 681–683
Disease
    Principal diseases, 663
    Resistance to, 664
Dreams, 680, 681, 689, 690
Dress, 678, 679
Eating and drinking customs, 681–683
Education
    Civic action projects, 703
    Desire for, 665
    Formal, 657
    Informal, 665, 673
    Military training, 657, 704
Endurance, 664
Epan; *see* Tribal subgroups
Family
    Authority within, 666, 667
    Importance of, 665
Health
    Civic action projects, 703
    Diseases, 663, 664
    General conditions, 662–664
    Practices, 662–664
    Resistance to disease, 664
History
    Factual, 656–658, 696, 697
    Legendary, 655

Houses
    Social importance of longhouse, 666
    Structure, 659, 660
Hroi, Map, 650, 652
H'wing; *see* Tribal subgroups
Indochina War (1946–1954), 657
Incest, customs relating to, 669
Intelligence, 665
Interpreters, 655
Jarai, Map, 650, 652, 678
Jewelry, 678, 679, 681
Kam Angin, 690, 691
Kam Buh, 690, 691
Kam Hwar, 690, 691
K'drao; *see* Tribal subgroups
Kinship system, 666
Kpa; *see* Tribal subgroups
Ktul or Klul; *see* Tribal subgroups
Labor, division of, 666
Language
    Desire to learn another, 665
    Knowledge of other languages, 655
    Rhade, 654, 655, 657
    Written, 654, 655
Legal System
    French colonial, 696–699
    Republic of Vietnam, 697
    Traditional, tribal, 697–699
Legends, 655
Leisure time activities, 668
Location
    Neighboring groups, Map, 650, 652
    Tribal subgroups, Map, 650, 652
    Villages, 659
Marriage, 668, 669, 670
M'dhur; *see* Tribal subgroups
"Measuring the Stick," 679
Mjao, 687
M'nong, Map, 650, 651, 652
Monsoons, 652
Name, origin of tribal, 651
Omens, 679, 685–687
Origins, tribal, 654
Physical characteristics, 662
Po lan, 667, 695, 698
Population, 651
Pregnancy, customs relating to, 664, 670–672
Property system, 666, 694, 695, 696
Psychological characteristics, 665
Puberty rite, 674
Rape, customs relating to, 669
Ray, 689, 690, 693
Religious practitioners, 687
Rivers, 652
Roads, 653, 659
Sabatier, 655, 657
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Settlement, tribal
    Location preferences, 689, 690
    Patterns, 658
Sorcerer or shaman, 663
Spirits, 685, 686, 687, 688
Souls, concept of, 672, 686
Terrain analysis, 652, 653
Transportation, 653
Tribal subgroups, 651, 652
Viet Cong, 699, 700
Villages
    Change in, 658
    Historical, 656
    Physical layout, 659
    Population, 659
Water supply, 683
Weapons, 704
World War II, 657

The Sedang

Abortion, 734
Adaptability to change, 730, 753
Administration
    Civic action projects, 752
    French, 746–748
    Local, village, 746–747
    Republic of Vietnam, 746–747
Agriculture
    Agricultural cycle, 744
    Ceremonies relating to, 741, 742
    Civic action projects, 752
    Division of labor, 733
    Major crops and activities, 744
Animals, 738, 739
Arts and skills, 731, 745
Bahnar, Map, 721, 722
Beliefs, 737–740
Birth, customs relating to, 734
Bru, 724
Burial customs, 736
Ceremonies
    Agricultural, 738, 739
    Death and burial, 736
    Marriage, 733, 734

- Puberty rite, 736
- Related to birth, 734
- Religious, 741, 742

Chief, village, 746, 747

Children
- Activities of, 736
- Informal education, 736
- Puberty rite, 736
- Treatment of, 736

Civic action
- Guidelines, 751
- Planning, 751, 752
- Projects, 752

Climate, 722

Communications
- Civic action, 751
- Techniques, 750

Communists; *see* Viet Cong

Cor (Ta-Cor), 721

Cua, Map, 720, 722

Customs and taboos
- Animals, 738
- Dress, 737
- Drinking, 738
- Eating, 738
- House construction, 725–728
- Incest, 738
- Outsiders, 739
- Warfare, 739, 740

Danja, 721

Death, 736

Deities, 741–743

Diet, 738

Disease
- Principal diseases, 729
- Resistance to, 729, 730

Dress, 737

Duong, 721

Eating and drinking customs, 727, 738

Education
- Civic action projects, 752
- Desire for, 730
- Formal, 730
- Informal, 733
- Military training, 753

Endurance, 730

Family, 721, 732, 733

Folk beliefs, 737,738

Halang, Map, 720, 721, 722

Health
- Civic action projects, 752
- Diseases, 729
- Efforts to improve, 730, 757
- General conditions, 729, 730
- Practices, 729, 730
- Resistance to disease, 729, 730

History
- Factual, 725
- Legendary, 724

Houses
- Ceremonies relating to, 725
- Construction, 725
- Social importance of longhouse, 725
- Structure, 725–728

Hre, Map, 720, 721, 722

Incest, customs relating to, 730, 734

Intelligence of tribe, 730

Jeh, Map, 720, 722

Jewelry, 737

Katu, 724

Kayong, May, 720, 722

Kinship system, 732, 733

Koho, 721

Labor, division of, 733

Language
- Desire to learn another, 730
- Knowledge of other languages, 724
- Written, 724

Legal system
- French colonial, 746–748
- Republic of Vietnam, 746–748
- Traditional, tribal, 746–748

Literacy, 724

Location
- Neighboring tribes, Map, 720, 721
- Tribal subgroups, 720, 721, 722
- Villages, 721

Marriage, 733, 734

Missionaries
- Contacts with, 724
- Medical aid of, 730

M'nong, 721

Monom, Map, 720, 721

Monsoons, 722

Name, origin of tribal, 721

Origins, tribal, 721, 722

Outsiders
- Customs relating to, 739, 755–757
- Suggestions for personnel working with the Sedang, 755–757

Paramilitary capabilities, 753, 754

Physical characteristics, 729, 753

Political organization, 746, 747

Population, 721

Property system, 745

Psychological characteristics, 730, 731, 755
Puberty rite, 736
Religious practitioners (sorcerers), 742, 743
Rengao, Map, 720, 722
Rivers, 722
Roads, 723
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Settlement patterns, 725–728
Spirits, 737, 738
Stieng, 721
Taboos; *see* Customs and taboos
Terrain analysis, 722
To-Drah, 721
Trade, tribal, 745
Transportation, 723
Tribal folklore; *see* Legends
Tribal subgroups, 721
Viet Cong, 721, 748, 749
Villages
  Physical layout, 725–728
  Population, 725
Water supply, 725
Weapons, 753

The Stieng

Abortion, 779
Administration
  Civic action projects, 794, 795
  French, 789, 791
Adultery, customs relating to, 778
Agriculture
  Ceremonies relating to, 785
  Civic action projects, 796
  Division of labor, 777, 787
Animals, 768
Arts and skills, special, 787, 788
Bahnar, 767, 770
Beliefs, *see also* Religion, 799
  Customs and taboos
Birth, customs relating to, 779
Bride price; *see* Marriage; *see also* Divorce
Budeh, 767, 770
Budip, 767
Bulach, 767
Bulo, 767
Ceremonies
  Agricultural, 785
  Death and burial, 785, 786
  Illness, 774, 775, 785
  Religious, 785, 786, 799
Chief, village, 789
Children, 777, 781
Civic action
  Guidelines, 794, 795
  Planning and projects, 794, 795
Class structure, 779
Communications
  Civic action, techniques, 793–795
Communist; *see* Viet Cong
Customs and taboos
  Drinking, 783
  Eating, 783
  Village, 783, 784, 799
  Warfare, 784
Deities, 785
Disease
  Ceremonies for, 775, 785
  Principal diseases, 774, 775
Divorce, 778, 779
Dress, 781
Drinking customs, 783
Eating customs, 783
Education
  Civic action projects, 796
  Military training, 797
Endurance, 775
Family, importance of, 777–779
Health
  Civic action projects, 775, 796, 800
  Diseases, 774, 775
  Practices, 774, 775
History
  Factual, 771, 772
  Legendary, 770, 771
Houses, 772, 773
Infanticide, 779
Indochina War (1946-1954), 772, 792
Intelligence of tribe, 775, 776
Jarai, 777
Jewelry, 781
Khmer, Map, 766, 767
Kinship system, 777, 778
Koho, Map, 766, 767
Labor, division of, 777
Language
  Knowledge of other languages, 770
  Written, 770
Legal System
  French colonial, 791, 792
  Republic of Vietnam, 790–792
  Traditional, tribal, 790, 791

Legends, 770, 771, 782
Location, 767
Ma, Map, 766, 770
Marriage, 777, 778
Missionaries, 786
M'nong, Map, 766, 770
Name, origin of tribal, 767, 770
Outsiders
    Customs relating to, 782, 783
    Suggestions for personnel working with the Stieng, 798–800
Paramilitary capabilities, 796, 797
Physical characteristics, 774
Political organization, 767, 789–792
Population, 767
Property system, 788
Psychological characteristics, 775, 776
Religious practitioners; *see* Sorcerers
Rhade, 772, 777
Rivers, 768, 769
Roads, 769
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Sedang, 767, 770
Settlement patterns, 772, 773
Slaves, 776, 779, 780
Sorcerers, 775
Spirits, 782, 785
Sre, 770
Tattoos, 774, 793
Terrain analysis, 768, 769
Trade, 788
Tribal subgroups, 767
Viet Cong, 775, 792
Villages
    Authority within, 789, 790
    Change in, 772
    Customs, 782–784
    Population, 772
Wealth, 779, 780
Weapons, 775, 797

OTHER MINORITY GROUPS

The Binh Xuyen

Bao Dai (Emperor), 810, 812–814
Bien Hoa, 812
Binh Xuyen, 809–819
Buddhists, 814
Cao Dai, 809, 810, 815–819
Cao Van Tri (Col.), 817
Caravelle group, 819
Chinese, 811, 813
Cholon, 809–814, 817, 818
Cloche d'Or, 813, 816
Communists, 809, 811, 812
Duong Van Duong, 811
Duong Van Ha, 811
French, 809–818
Grand Monde, 809, 813, 816
Hoa Hao, 809, 810, 815–818
Indochina War, 809, 814
Japanese, 811
Lai Huu Sang, 814, 818
Le Van Vien (alias Bay Vien), 809–814
Muoi Tri, 811
Nam Bo (Viet Minh Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam), 811
National Congress, 809, 814
National Liberation Front, 810, 819
Ngo Dinh Diem, 815–819
Ngo Dinh Nhu, 813
Nguyen Binh, 811, 812
Nguyen Khanh (Gen.), 819
Nguyen Van Hinh (Gen.), 810, 815
Nguyen Van Tam, 815
Nguyen Van Xuan (Gen.), 815
Plaine des Joncs, 812
Rung Sat, 812, 818
Saigon, 809–814, 817, 818
Saigon-Cholon area, 809–814
Tran Van Giau, 811
Tran Van Huu, 812
Tu Ty, 811
United Front of National Forces, 810, 816
United National Front, 812
Viet Cong, 810
Viet Minh, 809, 812, 813
Vietnamese Government, 813
Vietnamese National Army, 809–814

Bac Lieu, 852
Bach Y Lien Doan, 852
Ba Cut, 843
Ba Den, 831, 837
Ba Xuyen, 829
Ban Chin Dao, 853
Bao Dai, 828, 838, 839, 840
Ben Tre, 834, 852, 853
Bernard, St., 832
Bien Hoa, 829
Binh Xuyen, 828, 839, 842, 843, 844, 854
British, 836
Buddha, 827, 830, 832, 849, 851
Cambodia, 829
Can Tho, 851
Caravelle Group, 845
Chieu Minh Danh, 851
Cholon, 834
Chon Ly Tam Nguyen, 852
Christ, 827, 830, 832, 849
Cochin China, 828, 830, 835, 836, 839
Communists, *see also* Viet Minh, 828, 829, 836, 838, 839, 840, 845, 846
Confucius, 827, 832, 849, 851
Co Quan Phuoc Thien, 833
Cuong De, 827, 834
Cuu Trung Dai, 832
Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do; *see* Tam Ky
Dai-Viet, 845
Dien Bien Phu, 828, 840
Dinh Tuong, 829
Duclos (Admiral), 832
Duong Van Dang, 836
Duong Van Minh, 846
French, 827, 828, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 853
Geneva Agreement, 828, 840
Gia Dinh, 834
Gia Long, 827, 834
Giao Tong (Pope), 833
Go Ken, 831
Harkins, Gen. Paul D., 846
Hau Nghia, 829
Hiep Thien Dai, 833
Hoa Hao, 827, 828, 829, 830, 835, 836, 838, 839, 842, 843, 844, 845, 847, 853
Ho Chi Minh, 828, 840
Ho Phap (Pope), 828, 829, 833, 838, 839, 840, 843, 844, 851, 853
Hugo, Victor, 832
Indochina, 827, 835, 837, 843
Japanese, 834, 835
Joan of Arc, 832
John the Baptist, St., 832
Kien Hoa, 829, 852
Lao Tze, 827, 830, 832, 849, 851
Le Van Tat, 846
Le Van Trung, 831, 833, 853
Le Van Ty, 844
Le Van Vien, 842, 843
Long An, 829
Ly Thai Bach, 833, 851
Mahayana Buddhism, 832
Mekong Delta, 829
Minh Chon Dao, 852
Minh Chon Ly, 851, 852, 853
Moses, 830, 832
My Tho, 834, 851
Nam Bo, 836
Ngo Dinh Diem, 828, 829, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846
Ngo Van Chieu, 830, 831, 851
Ngoc Hoang Thuong De, 851
Nguyen Buu Tai, 852
Nguyen Hao Ca, 851
Nguyen Huu Chin, 852
Nguyen Khanh, 846
Nguyen Ngoc Tuong, 853
Nguyen Thanh Phuong, 836, 840, 842, 843, 844, 845
Nguyen Van Hinh, 842
Nguyen Van Kien, 852
Nguyen Van Tam, 839
Nguyen Van Thanh, 836, 839
Nguyen Van Vi, 844
Ong Tao, 851
Pham Cong Tac, 827, 833, 835, 837, 838, 839, 843, 845
Pham Mon, 833
Phan Huy Quat, 845, 846
Phong Dinh, 829
Quang Am, 832
Quang Cong, 832, 851
Quyen Giao Tong (Interim Pope), 833
Saigon, 828, 830, 831, 836, 840, 843, 846
Sun Yat Sen, 832
Taoism, 827, 830
Tam Ky, 827, 830, 832, 833, 838, 851, 852, 853
Tam Tran, 851
Tay Ninh, 828, 829, 831, 832, 835, 837, 838, 839, 846, 851, 852, 853
Thap-Hni Thoi-quan, 833
Theravada Buddhism, 832

Thich Ca, 851
Tien Thien, 851, 852, 853
Tran Quang Vinh, 835, 836, 837
Tran Van Giau, 836
Tran Van Huu, 828
Tran Van Soai, 843
Trinh Minh The, 828, 838, 843, 844
Trotskyites, 836
United Front of National Forces, 829, 843
Viet Minh, 827, 828, 829, 836, 838, 839, 843
Vietnam, Republic of, 829, 838, 841, 846
Vietnamese National Army, 828, 829, 838, 840, 842, 843, 844
Vinh Binh, 829
Vinh Canh, 843
Vo Van Ngan, 851
World War II, 827, 835

The Cham

Administration
  French, 910
  Local, village, 910
Adultery, customs relating to, 877, 878
Agriculture
  Ceremonies relating to, 888
  Division of labor, 907, 908
  Major crops and activities, 907, 908
Ancestors, cult of, 884
Animals, 892
Arts, special, 908
Bahnar, Map, 862
Birth, customs relating to, 879
Brahman Cham; *see* Cham Kaphir
Burial customs, 881–884
Calendar, 884, 885
Cartmaking, 878
Ceremonies
  Agricultural, 891, 892
  Brahman, 900–902
  Cart construction, 895
  Child naming, 879
  Dam construction, 892, 893
  Death and burial, 881–884
  House construction, 893
  Marriage, 877–879
  Moslem, 904–906
  Puberty rite, 880, 881
  Related to birth, 879
Cham Bani, 902–906
Cham Kaphir, 895–902
Chief, village; *see* Patriarch, village
Children
  Education of, 880
  Naming of, 879
  Puberty rite, 880, 881
  Treatment of, 880
Civic action
  Guidelines, 913
  Projects, 913, 914
Clan structure, 877
Communications
  Civic action, 913
  Techniques, 912
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Cua, Map, 862
Customs and taboos, 886–894
Death and burial customs, 881–884
Deities
  Brahman, 896–898
  Moslem, 903
Disease; *see* Health
Divorce, 879
Dress, 886, 887
Eating and drinking customs, 889, 890
Education, 880
Entertainment and celebrations, 890, 891
Etiquette, concept of, 888
Family, 877
Folk beliefs, 887, 888; *see also* Taboos
Health
  Cham treatment of, 874, 875
  Civic action projects, 913
  Diseases, 874
History
  Factual, 869–871
  Legendary, 869
  List of significant historical events, 871, 872
Houses
  Folk beliefs about, 893
  Location, 872
  Structure, 872, 873
Hre, Map, 862
Jarai, Map, 862
Jewelry, 886, 887
Kaphir Cham; *see* Cham, Kaphir
Khmer, Map, 862
Kinship system, 877
Koho, Map, 862
Labor, division of, 877, 907, 908

Language
  Kinship to other languages, 868
  Written, 868
Legal system, 911
Level of civilization, 884, 885
Location
  Neighboring groups, Map, 862, 864
  Terrain analysis, 865–867
Manual dexterity, 875
Marriage, 877, 878
M'nong, Map, 862
Moslem Cham; *see* Cham Bani
Origin of Cham, 863
Outsiders
  Customs relating to, 889
  General attitude toward, 876
  Suggestions for personnel working with the Cham, 916, 917
Paramilitary capabilities, 915
Patriarch, village, 910
Physical characteristics, 874
Political organization, 910
Population, 864
Priests
  Brahman, 898–900
  Moslem, 903
Property system, 909
Psychological characteristics, 875
Puberty rite, 880, 881
Raglai
  North, Map, 862
  South, Map, 862
Religion
  Brahman, 895–902
  Effect on development, 906
  Moslem, 904–906
  Rituals of, 891–894
  See also Deities
Rhade, Map, 862
Rivers, 864
Roads, 864
Sacrifices; *see* Ceremonies
Sanitation, 874
Settlement patterns, 872, 873
Social structure, 877
Spirits; *see* Religion
Stieng, Map, 862
Suicide, 875, 876
Taboos
  Animals, 890
  Eating and drinking, 889, 890
  House construction, 887, 888
  Outsiders, 889
  Warfare, 890
Trade, 907
Terrain analysis, 865–867
Viet Cong, 911
Villages, 863, 910
Warfare, customs relating to, 890

The Chinese

Agriculture, 938, 988
Ancestor worship, 975, 976, 979
Animals, customs with regard to, 970, 971
Animism, 931, 977
Annam, 940, 994
Bangs; see Congregations
Birth, customs regarding, 957
Buddhism, 931, 975, 980, 982, 984, 998, 1001
Cambodia, 940, 959
Ceremonies
  Ancestor worship, 975, 979
  Confucianism, 979
Children
  Child-rearing practices, 957
  Importance of, 954
  Naming of, 957
Christianity, 931, 949
Civic action considerations, 1003
Cochin China, 934, 940, 942, 943
Communications
  Civic action, 1003
  Techniques, 1001
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Concubinage, 956, 957
Confucianism, 931, 949, 952, 954, 978–980, 984, 985
Congregations (*bangs* or mutual aid societies), 931, 932, 933, 943, 944, 991, 994, 995
Customs and taboos, 964–974
  Animals, 970, 971
  Birth, 957
  Death and burial, 961, 962, 975
  Dress, 964
  Eating and drinking, 968, 969
  Folk beliefs, 964, 965
  Marriage, 955, 956
  Warfare, 971, 972
Death and burial, 961, 962, 975
Dialect groups, 932, 934, 945–947, 949, 950, 991, 994

Diet, 968
Divorce, 956
Dress, 964
Economy
    Chinese in national, 931, 939, 940, 945, 973, 986–988
    Organization, 968–988, 991
    Trade with other groups, 992, 993
Education, 958–960
    Chinese system, 958–960
    French system, 958
    Vietnamese system, 958
Entertainment
    Conversation, 970
    Gambling, 970
    Opium smoking, 970
    Sports, 970
    Theater, 970
Etiquette, 973, 974
Family, 931, 949, 953, 962, 972
Folk beliefs, 964, 965
French, 933, 942, 958, 994, 995
Health, 945, 946
History
    Factual, 935-943
    Legendary, 938, 939
Holidays and festivals, 981–984
Indochina, 942, 943
Indochina War (1945–1954), 943
Japanese, 942
Kinship system, 951–953
Language
    Chinese, 931, 933, 958–961
    Classification, 936–938
    Dialect groups, 932, 934, 945, 946–947, 949, 950, 991, 994
    Vietnamese, 931, 939, 959, 960
    Written Chinese, 936, 937, 960
Literature, Chinese, 1001, 1002
Marriage
    Ceremonies, 955, 956
    Importance of, 955
    Regulations, 937, 951
Medicine, 937, 945, 946, 978
Minh Huong, 933, 996
Mohammedanism, 931, 975
Music and drama, importance in Chinese cultural life, 970, 1001, 1003
Names
    Importance of surname, 950
    Naming of children, 957
    Origin of group, 931, 932
North Vietnam, 933, 943
Occupations
    Agriculture, 988
    Banking and commercial facilities, 990
    Nonmanufacturing occupations, 989, 990
    Other light industries, 989
    Rice processing, 989
    Service industries, 991
    Textile manufacturing, 989
    Transportation, 990
Opium War, 941
Origin of groups (Chinese), 936
Outsiders
    Attitude of Chinese toward, 948
    Customs with regard to, 972, 973
Physical characteristics, 945
Political consciousness and opinion, 997, 998
Political organization, 994–999
Population, 931–933
Property and inheritance, 962, 963
Psychological characteristics, 946, 947
Publications, 1000, 1001
    Newspapers, 1000
    Textbooks, 1001
Religion, 931, 975–985
    Ancestor worship, 731, 975, 976
    Animism, 931, 975, 977, 981
    Buddhism, 931, 975, 981, 985, 998
    Christianity, 931, 975
    Confucianism, 931, 949, 954, 975, 978–980, 984, 985
    Mohammedanism, 931, 975
    Taoism, 931, 938, 975, 977, 978, 981, 985
Settlement patterns, 943, 944
Social structure, 949–965
Symbols and color, Chinese appreciation of, 1002
Taoism, 931, 938, 975, 977, 978, 981, 985
Temples, 979–981
Thailand, 951, 982, 983
Trade, 938, 992, 993
Viet Cong, 993–999
Vietnam, Republic of, 931–934, 936, 937, 940–944, 949, 959, 960, 964, 972, 979, 982, 988, 991–999
Warfare, 971, 972
Weapons, 971, 972
Women, position in society, 931, 953, 954
World War II, 937, 942

The Hoa Hao

An Giang Province, 1021, 1023, 1028, 1039
An Xuyen Province, 1038
Bac Lieu (Vinh Loi), 1024, 1031, 1039
Ba Cut (Le Quang Vinh), 1021, 1022, 1028, 1029, 1033, 1934, 1035, 1036, 1038, 1039
Ba Ga Mo, Vo Va Dieu, 1031
Ba Xuyen Province, 1039
Ban Tri Su, 1031
Bao An, 1031
Bao Dai, 1021, 1022, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1032, 1034
Bassac River, 1027, 1031
Ben Tre (now Truc Giang), 1031
Binh Xuyen, 1022, 1031, 1032, 1034, 1035, 1036
Buddhism, 1021, 1023, 1030, 1036, 1040
Ca Mau Peninsula, 1033
Cabinet posts for Hoa Hao members, 1021, 1032, 1034
Cai Be, 1024
Cai Von, 1027, 1029, 1035
Cambodia, 1036
Can Tho, 1025, 1027, 1029, 1036
Cao Dai, 1022, 1025, 1027, 1028, 1030, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039
Catholic Apostolic Vicar of Vinh Long, 1030
Catholics, 1036, 1039
Chau Doc Province, 1021, 1023, 1024, 1028, 1029, 1031, 1037, 1039
Cho Moi, 1028
Cholon, 1024, 1027, 1034, 1035
Chuong Thien Province, 1038, 1039
Cochin China, 1023, 1024
Communists, 1021, 1022, 1026, 1027, 1036, 1037, 1039
Dai-Viet (Greater Vietnam Party), 1036
Dan Chu Xa Hoi Dang (Vietnam Social Democratic Party), known as Dan Xa, 1025, 1028
Dan Xa; *see* Dan Chu Xa Hoi Dang
Dao Khung (Mad Bonze), 1024
Dao Xen, 1024
Diem; *see* Ngo Dinh Diem
Dinh Tuong Province, 1029
Due Hoa, 1026
Duong Van Minh, Maj. Gen., 1035, 1038
French, 1021–1031, 1033, 1034, 1037
French Command, 1027, 1029
French Expeditionary Corps, 1025, 1033
Front of National Union, 1030
Geneva Agreement, 1030
Hai Ngoan (Lam Thanh Nguyen), 1025, 1028, 1029, 1031, 1035, 1036
Hinh, 1036
Hoa Hao Amazon Corps, 1027
Hoa Hao factionalism, 1021, 1025–1031, 1034, 1035
Hoa Hao Front; *see* Mat Tran Hoa Hao
Hoa Hao village, 1021, 1023
Huong Ca Bo, 1028
Huyen Phu So, 1021, 1023–1026, 1037, 1039, 1040, 1041
Indochina War, 1027
Japanese, 1021, 1023, 1024
Khoi Tu-Do Tien-Bo (Committee for Liberty and Progress), Caravelle Group, 1037
Kien Giang Province, 1039
Kien Phong Province, 1039
Laos, 1024
Law for the Protection of Morality, 1037
Le Cong Bo, 1024
Le Quang Vinh; *see* Ba Cut
Le Thi Gam, 1027
Le Van Vien, 1030, 1032
Long Xuyen, 1027, 1029, 1031, 1033, 1038
Ly Ba Phamm, Lt. Col., 1038
"Lying-down Hoa Hao," 1028
Mat Tran Hoa Hao (Hoa Hao Front), 1027
Military activities, 1021, 1022, 1025–1031, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1037
Minh Mang, 1023
Minh Thuan, 1037
My Tho, 1024, 1031, 1035
Nam Bo (Viet Minh Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam), 1026
Nam Lua; *see* Tran Van Soai
National Congress, 1030
Nationalism, 1021
National Legislative Council, 1039
National Liberation Front (NLF), 1037
National Unified Front, 1025

New York Times, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1038
Ngia Quan Cach Mang Ve Quoc Lien Doi Nguyen Trung Truc, 1025
Ngo Dinh Diem, 1021, 1022, 1030, 1032–1039
Ngo Dinh Luyen, 1035
Ngo Dinh Nhu, 1030, 1035
Nguyen Cao Ky, Marshal, 1039
Nguyen Cong Hau, Dr., 1038
Nguyen Giac Ngo, 1029, 1031, 1033, 1036
Nguyen Khanh, Gen., 1038
Nguyen Than Day (Tu Day), 1033
Nguyen Thanh Phuong, 1035
Nguyen Van Hinh, 1022, 1032
Nguyen Van Hue, 1033
Nguyen Van Quyen (Phat Thay Tay An or Phat Tay), 1023, 1040
Nguyen Van Sam, 1025
Nguyen Van Xuan, 1032
Nui Cam, 1024
Number of followers, 1021, 1023, 1029, 1031, 1033, 1037, 1039
Pham Cong Tac, 1030, 1034
Pham Huy Quat, 1037, 1039
Phat Giao Lien Hiep Hoi (United Association of the Buddhist Religion), 1024
Phat Tay; *see* Nguyen Van Quyen
Phat Thay Tay An; *see* Nguyen Van Quyen
Phong Dinh Province, 1039
Plaine des Joncs, 1033
Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam (Viet Minh); *see* Nam Bo
Rach Gia, 1031
Relationship with other groups; *see* Binh Xuyen, Cao Dai, and Viet Minh
Religious aspect of Hoa Haoism, 1023, 1040, 1041
Rice market, Hoa Hao control of, 1031
Saigon, 1024, 1027, 1031, 1034, 1035
"Sam Gian," 1024
Seven Mountains, 1023, 1036
So, Huyen Phu; *see* Huyen Phu So
Soai, Tran Van; *see* Tran Van Soai
Territorial control, 1021, 1022, 1024, 1027–1031, 1035
Terrorism, 1021, 1024, 1027
Thay Xom, 1023
Thot Not, 1028, 1029
Transbassac region, 1033
Tran Trung Dung, 1037
Tran Van Soai, 1024–1031
Tran Van Tuoi, Lt. Col., 1039
Truong Kim Cu, 1037
Tu Day; *see* Nguyen Than Day
United Association of Buddhist Religion; *see* Phat Giao Hiep Hoi
United Front of National Forces, 1022, 1034
United National Front, 1024, 1025
United States, 1023
Vi, 1036
Vien, Le Van; *see* Le Van Vien
Viet Cong, 1037, 1039
Viet Minh, 1021, 1022, 1025–1030, 1031, 1033, 1037
Vietnam Social Democratic Party; *see* Dan Chu Xa Hoi Dang
Vietnamese Government, 1028, 1029, 1032
Vietnamese National Army, 1022, 1029, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036
Vietnamese National Police, 1039
Vietnamese People's Party, 1036
Vinh Loi; *see* Bac Lieu
Vinh Long Province, 1030, 1031, 1036, 1039
Vi Thanh (Duc Long), 1038
World War II, 1024

The Khmer

Adultery, 1072
Agriculture
  Civic action considerations, 1106
  Crops, 1099
  Use of tools in, 1079, 1099
Arts and skills, 1065
Birth, customs relating to, 1072–1073
Buddhism, 1051, 1055, 1056, 1058, 1062, 1065, 1078, 1089–1098
  Clergy, 1056, 1065, 1081, 1092, 1093, 1095, 1103
  Hinayana (Theravada), 1051, 1055, 1062, 1065, 1075, 1089, 1090, 1095
  Mahayana, 1051, 1055, 1089
  Rituals, 1093
Calendar, 1077–1078
Cambodia, 1051, 1054, 1056, 1057, 1060,

1062, 1089, 1093, 1097, 1103, 1107
Children, 1068, 1069
  Ceremonies with regard to, 1073
  Naming of, 1073
Chinese civilization, influence on Khmer, 1058, 1062, 1066, 1087
Civic action considerations
  Agriculture, 1106
  Education, 1106
  Health and sanitation, 1106
  Public administration, 1106
Civilization, level of, among Khmer, 1077
Communications
  Civic action,
  Techniques, 1104
Communists; *see* Viet Cong
Customs
  Birth, 1072–1073
  Death and cremation, 1075–1077
  Dress, 1081
  Drinking and smoking, 1083
  Eating, 1083–1084
  Entertainment, 1084–1085
  Folk beliefs, 1082
  Outsiders, 1087
  Warfare, 1088
Death and cremation, 1075–1077
Diet, 1065
Division of labor, 1068, 1069
Divorce, 1068, 1072–1073
Drinking and smoking, 1083
Eating, 1083–1084
Economy
  Activities, 1051
  Organization, 1099–1100
  Rice in, 1099
Education, 1074–1075, 1106
Entertainment, 1084–1085
Etiquette, 1086–1087
Family, 1068, 1069
Folk beliefs, 1082–1083
French, 1052, 1057, 1060, 1074, 1088, 1101, 1107
Health
  Bathing practices, 1063
  Civic action considerations, 1106
  Diseases, 1063, 1064
  Influence of Buddhist taboos on, 1064
History
  Factual, 1057–1060
  Legendary, 1056–1057
Houses, 1060–1061, 1097
Indian civilization, influence on Khmer, 1051, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1059
Indochina, 1051, 1058
Indochina War (1946–1954), 1101
Indo-Malays, influence on Khmer, 1054
Language, 1051, 1104
  Cambodian, 1075
  Classification of Khmer, 1054
  Description and derivation of Khmer, 1054–1056
  Pali, 1055, 1056, 1090
  Sanskrit, 1055
  Vietnamese, 1056, 1074
Laos, 1054, 1058, 1059, 1089
Location, neighboring groups, Map, 1052
Marriage
  Customs, 1069, 1070
  Divorce and second marriage, 1072
  Polygamy, 1072
  Prohibitions with regard to, 1072
Name, origin of, 1051
Occupations, predominant, 1100
Outsiders
  Customs relating to, 1087–1088
  Suggestions for personnel working with the Khmer, 1108–1112
Paramilitary capabilities, 1107
Physical characteristics, 1063
Political organization, 1103
Polygamy, 1072
Population, 1051, 1052
Property system, 1077, 1101
Psychological characteristics, 1065–1066
Religion
  Animism, 1094
  Buddhism, 1090, 1094
Religious holidays, 1097–1098
Religious practitioners, 1095–1096, 1111
Rituals, 1093, 1097
Roads, 1053
Saigon, 1052, 1053, 1103
Settlement patterns, 1060–1061
Social organization, 1051, 1066
Sorcerers, 1065, 1096
Spirits, 1061, 1064, 1065, 1072, 1073, 1083, 1094, 1096
Standard of living, 1101–1102, 1112
Temples, 1061, 1074, 1093, 1104
Terrain analysis, 1052, 1060
Thai, influence on Khmer, 1054, 1059

Thailand, 1054, 1060, 1089
Tools and machines, use of, 1079–1080, 1099, 1100
Trade, 1100
Viet Cong, 1101, 1107
Viet Minh, 1088, 1101, 1107
Vietnam, Republic of, 1051, 1054, 1056, 1057, 1062, 1063, 1075, 1081, 1104
Vietnamese National Army, 1088
Warfare, customs relating to, 1088
Women, attitudes toward, 1085

The Indians and the Pakistanis

Azad Hind Fouz, 1124
Bose, Subhas Chandra, 1124
Chettyars, 1123, 1124, 1125
Chinese, 1123
Congregations, 1124
Contact with Vietnamese, 1126
Dravidian, 1126
Economic activities, 1123, 1125, 1126
"Fighting Committee of the Revolutionary Peoples of Southern Indochina," 1124
"Hindus," 1123
Immigration, 1123, 1124
Indian Independence League, 1124
Indian National Army, 1124
Japanese, 1124
Malabars, 1123
Moneylending, 1124
Nehru, 1124
Parsees, 1123
Political organization, 1124, 1125
Population, 1123
Religion, 1125
Saigon-Cholon, 1124
Shiite Moslems, 1125
Sikhs, 1126
Sindi, 1126
Sunni Moslems, 1125
Tamilians, 1126

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

HAROLD K. JOHNSON
General, United States Army,
Chief of Staff.

Official:

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, United States Army,
The Adjutant General.

Distribution:

To be distributed in accordance with Standard Distribution List.

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1967—O 233-659

DATE DUE

DUE	RETURNED
APR 1 8 2002	MAY 0 2 2002
MAY 1 3 2002	

A fine of 25 cents per day is charged when
this item is overdue.

Minority groups in the Republi main
301.4509597A512m
3 1262 03374 0902

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LIBRARY

303